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CIVIL WAR, VIOLENCE AND NATIONALITY
FROM EMPIRE TO NATION STATE: THE
CIRCASSIANS IN TURKEY (1918-1938)

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Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD

2017

Department of History

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Abstract

This thesis argues that the transformation of Turkey from an empire to a nation state and the chaos in post-WWI Anatolia, drastically affected, first the relationship between the Circassians and the Ottoman State and subsequently that with the Turkish Republic. Although the Circassians relied on the patronage of the Ottoman State, after the Great War political authority was represented by two governments: the Ottoman Porte in Istanbul as a *de jure* government, and the Ankara government as the *de facto* one, and the loyalty of the Circassian people was contrary to traditional accounts divided between the two. In general, the ordinary Circassian people supported the loyalists in Istanbul, while the majority of the military elite and the CUP members among the Circassians backed the nationalists in Ankara.

This thesis magnifies the presence of the Circassians in this crucial period (1918-1938), illustrating how the post-WWI era and the transformative period from empire to a nation-state became a painful rather than a peaceful experience for those in the country from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. Furthermore, it examines the role of the Circassians during this period, focusing on the important western and central Anatolian conflicts they participated in between 1918 and 1938. In geographical terms, the thesis most prominently examines Yozgat, Ankara, Düzce, Adapazarı, İzmit, Gönen, and Manyas as these areas are where incidents broke out. The Anzavur, the Düzce-Adapazarı, the Yozgat, the Çerkes Ethem incidents, the attempt to prepare for Circassian autonomy under Greek occupation, the Gönen-Manyas deportations, and the Circassian opposition to the Kemalist regime, are the central topics that the thesis illuminates in detail.

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I am also grateful to the staff of the Prime Ministry's Ottoman Archives; the Prime Ministry's Republican Archives; the Turkish Military History and Strategic Studies archives (ATASE); the staff at the archives of the Institute for the History of the Turkish Revolution (TİTE); the SOAS Library where Dominique Akhoun-Schwarb and Kobir Ahmed were extremely generous with their time and help; the Western Thrace Minority Culture and Educational Company (BAKEŞ); the Centre for Islamic Studies (İSAM);

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Note on Place-names and names

Place-names and names are rendered according to the modern Turkish usage, that is, not by strict transliteration. Therefore, names are given as Abdülhamid not Abdulhamid, and Paşa not Pasha.

Abbreviations

ATASE, General Staff Military History and Strategic Studies Archive in Ankara, Genel Kurmay Başkanlığı Askeri Tarih ve Stratejik Etüd Başkanlığı Arşivi

ATASE/ATAZB, Atatürk Collection, Atatürk Koleksiyonu

ATASE/İSH, Turkish War of Independence Collection, İstiklal Harbi Koleksiyonu

BCA, Prime Ministry's Republican Archives, Başbakanlık Cumhuriyet Arşivleri

BOA, Prime Ministry's Ottoman Archives, Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri

CUP, Committee of Union and Progress, İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti

KAFFED, Federation of Caucasian Association, Kafkas Dernekleri Federasyonu

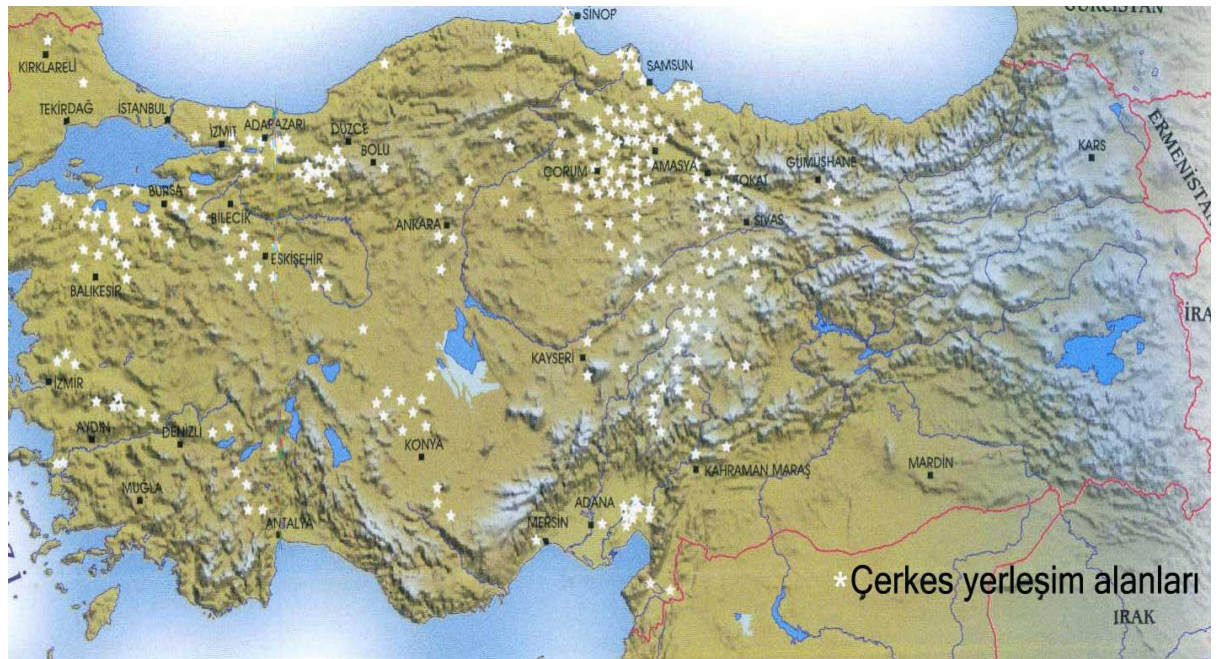
TGNA-TBMM, Turkish Grand National Assembly, Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi

TİTE, Ankara University, History of Turkish Revolution Institute Archive, Ankara Üniversitesi Türk İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü Arşivi

PRO/FO, Public Record Office/Foreign Office, National Archive, London, Kew Gardens

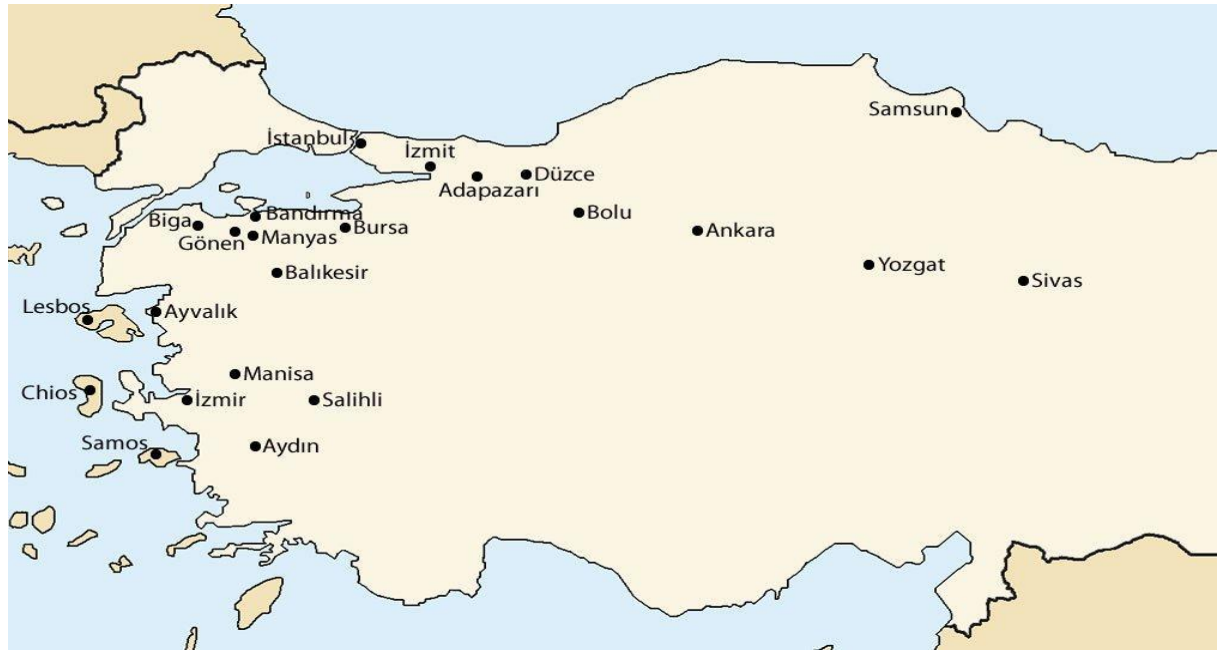
MAPS

MAP 1



Circassian settlements in Turkey, after 1864. (Source: Zeynel Abidin Besleney, "A Political History of Circassian Diaspora in Turkey 1864-2011". PhD diss. (SOAS, University of London, 2012))

MAP 2



Major towns and places in Turkey where significant military incidences involving Circassians took place between 1919 and 1927. (Source: Zeynel Abidin Besleney "A Political History of Circassian Diaspora in Turkey 1864-2011". PhD diss. (SOAS, University of London, 2012))

MAP 3



South Marmara. (Source: Ryan Gingeras, “Sorrowful Shores: Violence, Ethnicity and the end of the Ottoman Empire, 1912-1923” (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009))

Introduction

The Circassians¹ are the second largest non-Turkish ethnic group residing in the modern Republic of Turkey, after the Kurds. Their population numbers about 3 million.² The Circassians held a unique place in Ottoman-Turkish history, as during the Russian expansion into the North Caucasus in the 19th century, 90% of indigenous Circassians, approximately a million people, were exiled to the Ottoman Empire.³ Following their exile, which is symbolically dated the 21 May 1864, the Circassian elites became integrated into the Ottoman military and bureaucracy, achieving significant positions. Ordinary Circassians were either infantrymen in the Ottoman military and the Hamidian Cavalry,⁴ or farmers in the regions settled by the Ottomans following their exile.

With the re-institution of the Ottoman 1876 constitution in 1908, the Circassian elites benefited from a new liberal atmosphere prevailing in the empire. They established a Circassian school and published a periodical focused on their history, culture, language and the problems faced by them at that time within the empire. Subsequently, on 1 May 1910, they were granted permission by the Ottoman government to teach their own language to pupils attending their schools.⁵ However, this liberal climate did not endure. For nearly eleven years without cessation the Empire was at war on different fronts; from

¹ A discussion still continues among the North Caucasian groups of Turkey about the term 'Circassian'. Historically, the British used "Circassian" only for Adige people. On the other hand, the documents show that the Ottomans used Circassian, or 'Çerkes' in Turkish, to describe all of the North West Caucasian groups, namely the Adige, Ubikh, Abkhaz and Abaza. I use the same terminology in the Ottoman context. In contemporary Turkish context, particularly after the collapse of the Soviet Empire, Circassian is used mostly for the Adige and Ubikh people. Although Circassians and Abkhaz and Abazas are culturally closer to each other than other North Caucasians peoples, Abkhaz and Abaza are becoming more of an independent identity, distinct from the Circassian identity, especially after their war with Georgia and following independence in 1993.

² <http://www.cerkesarastirmalari.org/org/cerkesler>.

³ See Walter Richmond, *The Circassian Genocide* (New Jersey; Rutgers University Press, 2013). Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims 1821 - 1922* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1995). Kemal H. Karpat, "The Status of The Muslim under European Rule: The Eviction and Settlement of the Çerkes," in *Studies on Ottoman social and political history: selected articles and essays by Kemal Karpat*, (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

⁴ The Hamidian Cavalry was established in 1896, during the reign of Abdülhamid II. The aim was to strengthen state authority over the people of Eastern Anatolia and to suppress uprisings in the region.

⁵ Nuri Güçtekin, "Çerkes Teavün Mektebi (1910-1914)," *Yakın Dönem Türkiye Araştırmaları* 12, no. 23 (2013): 1–21.

1911 it fought against the occupation of Tripolitania by Italy, then in 1912-1913 it was involved in the Balkan Wars, then the Great War between 1914-1918, up until 1919-1922, when the Turkish War of Independence took place.⁶ There was also a coup d'état in 1913 by the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP),⁷ following which they gained control of the empire incrementally until the end of the Great War.⁸

In the days following the end of the First World War (WWI) in October 1918, the Armistice of Mudros was signed between the Allies and the Ottomans. At this time, high-ranking members of the CUP escaped the country to avoid facing charges for war crimes. After the war, the Allies allowed Greek troops to occupy Izmir in the West of Turkey in May 1919. The Ottoman Army was weak at that time, as its soldiers had become increasingly ravaged after suffering war throughout the entirety of the preceding last decade. The Ottoman military had suffered large-scale losses, casualties, and deserters during the so-called Great War. It was also enduring serious economic hardships and food shortages. At a time when morale and motivation were exceedingly low, the various paramilitary groups that emerged were initially perceived as saviours and protectors against the Greek occupation. They were considered useful as a means to defer further Greek offensive until the army would be ready to engage the Greek troops again.

Thus, war weariness was one of the greatest threats to both the nationalists⁹ and the Greek forces. The Anatolian people suffered scarcity and economic difficulties because of the

⁶ The term 'Turkish War of Independence' is used by academics and historians in the Turkish context for the wars between Turkish troops and the Allies, Greeks and Armenians during the 1919 - 1922 period. I will use the 'Turkish – Greek War of 1919-1922' to refer to the western front of the Turkish War of Independence.

⁷ The CUP was established as a secret society in 1889 and later turned into a political party (1906). It governed the empire after the military coup of 1913 until 1918.

⁸ CUP members and its ideology remained influential until the 1950s, though they were gradually replaced by the Kemalists and Kemalism, particularly after the assassination attempt (the so-called 'Izmir Conspiracy') against Mustafa Kemal in 1926. The first three presidents of the country – Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, İsmet İnönü and Celal Bayar – were all one-time members of the CUP.

⁹ Nationalists or later on 'Kemalists' are those who supported the movement against the Greek occupation and which were based in Anatolia. However, Kemalism in that period as a term did not have any secularist and authoritarian meanings; these features were taken after 1927.

war; furthermore, as some army officers wrote in their memoirs, people in Anatolia hated soldiers and the practice of military conscription in the post-WWI era.¹⁰

On the other side, the Greeks were also war weary. Military service had been made compulsory in 1911, and they had engaged in several wars over the last ten years, including the Balkan Wars, WWI, and the Turkish-Greek War of 1919-1922. Some soldiers recruited into the army in 1911 had still not been discharged, and an attitude of anti-militarism was pervasive among the soldiers in the Greek army.¹¹ Moreover, the Turkish-Greek War had triggered a domestic struggle between the Greek forces and the country's politicians. The war loyalists who wished to remain neutral disagreed on the subject of the occupation of Anatolia, the supporters of Venizelos, the Venizelists, backed the occupation.¹² Due to the difficulties associated with wartime conditions, the extended duration of a state of war and conditions at the front, the Anatolian campaign was one of misadventure for the Greek army, as reluctance and anger spread among Greek Army soldiers.¹³

One of the aims of this study is to examine the process of Circassian mobilisation during the Turkish-Greek War of 1919-1922. During that period, both the *de jure* government of the Ottoman Empire in Istanbul, and the *de facto* government in Ankara, used paramilitary groups against one another in their attempts to gain control over the country. This struggle between the two governments, and the use of paramilitary groups was akin to a civil war, particularly in the affected Adapazarı-Düzce and South Marmara regions,¹⁴ which experienced widespread chaos. This state of civil war and the associated chaos have

¹⁰ Rahmi Apak, *İstiklal Savaşında Garp Cephesi Nasıl Kuruldu* (İstanbul: Güven Basımevi, 1942) 88-89. Miralay Mehmet Arif Bey, *Anadolu İnkılabı (Mücadele-i Milliye Hatıratı 1335-1339)*, ed. Bülent Demirbaş (İstanbul: Arba, 1987), 12

¹¹ Ibid. 12, 13.

¹² Foti Benlisoy, *Kahramanlar Kurbanlar Direnişçiler Trakya ve Anadolu'daki Yunan Ordusunda Propaganda, Grev ve İsyan (1919 – 1922)* (İstanbul: İstos Yayınevi, 2014).10.

¹³ Ibid. 10.

¹⁴ South Marmara is in the south of the Marmara Sea and includes the provinces of Kale-i Sultani, Hüdavendigar, and Karesi. Today the term refers to Bursa, Balıkesir and Çanakkale.

generally been disregarded by scholars, particularly those responsible for producing the official (Kemalist) historiography of Turkey. According to Kemalist historiography, which was created and developed by the regime in the late 1920s and 1930s based on Atatürk's famous *Nutuk* speech¹⁵, there was no attempt to differentiate approaches to engagement in rebellions initiated against the 'national struggle' and 'collaborators' working with foreign forces. This chaos and the internal struggles that occurred during the Turkish War of Independence undermines the very notion of a republic created by the Kemalist regime, which emphasised the 'nationalist' and 'total war' features of the war against the Greek troops, during the republican period.

High-ranking CUP members, Ottoman bureaucrats, and military men who used paramilitary groups to form lines of resistance against the Greek troops beginning to occupy Western Anatolia in May 1919 were already planning their moves before the end of the Great War.¹⁶ They had been concealing arms for later use against the Alliance in case of the possible occupation of Anatolia after the Mudros Armistice (October, 1918). South Marmara was a key area processing arms, and its depots were responsible for organising the resistance movement and armed struggle against the possible occupation of the Anatolian portion of the empire by the Alliance. It was also a region in which people were already well armed, due to various intra-regional conflicts originating from the 1910s.

¹⁵ Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), *Nutuk* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1981). Suna Kili, *Kemalism* (İstanbul: School of Business Administration and Economics, Robert College, 1969). Munis Tekinalp, *Kemalizm* (İstanbul: Cumhuriyet Gazete ve Matbaası, 1936). Doğu Ergil, *Milli Mücadelenin Sosyal Tarihi* (Ankara: Turhan Kitabevi, 1981). Anıl Çeçen, *100 Soruda Kemalizm* (İstanbul: Kilit Yayıncılık, 2009).

¹⁶ Erik Jan Zürcher *the Unionist factor; the role of the Committee of Union and Progress in the Turkish national movement, 1905-1926* (Leiden: Brill, 1984), 106-117.

1 - Paramilitarism and Circassians

The paramilitary unit, as a form of resistance against occupation, was a key feature of the early resistance movement in Anatolia. As has been mentioned previously, the Anatolian people were already sickened by war having suffered lasting periods of conflict over the previous ten years. Although a group of high-ranking military men, prominent CUP members and local paramilitary leaders aimed to protect Anatolia, the people of the region were not voluntarily willing to support the resistance movement against Greek occupation. The only concern of the majority of the people was survival, rather than coming together around the resistance movement to fight against occupying forces. People were tired, and suffering from war, lack of food, disease and infirmity, as a result of casualties. They were unwilling to fight anymore. The populations of Anatolia viewed the high-ranking military men and officers as responsible for the catastrophic situation they encountered.¹⁷ Under such conditions, the role played by the paramilitary groups and brigades was crucial. The paramilitaries were more acceptable to people than the regular army. Moreover, the soldiers preferred to fight as members of the irregular forces, since they did not have to wear military uniform, the hierarchy was not so important as in the regular army, and the salary was much higher.¹⁸

The paramilitary groups in South Marmara mainly comprised of Circassians. One important question, which has hitherto not been adequately dealt with is this: Why did a large number of Circassians join paramilitary groups? Without understanding the Circassian presence in the Ottoman Empire, it is impossible to deduce the paramilitary activism of Circassians after the World War. It should be emphasised here that the Circassians had become war-like before being exiled to the Ottoman Empire, in response to their long struggle against the Russians from the mid-18th up until the late 19th century.

¹⁷ Rahmi Apak, *İstiklal Savaşında Garp Cephesi Nasıl Kuruldu* (İstanbul: Güven Basımevi, 1942), 88-89.

¹⁸ Ibid. 88-89.

Without a formal state structure, particularly those who used to live in the Northwest Caucasus, the Circassians tribes, fought a long guerrilla war against the Russians in the North Caucasus. In the post-exile period, their skills led them to be recruited into the army, to fill a gap in the Ottoman military's needs. They were also used by the Ottomans to counter the rebellions in the Balkans and Anatolia, and during the reign of Abdülhamit II, they formed part of the Hamidian cavalry.

Arguably, the Circassians were systematically organised to participate in the armed activities of the state, such as the military and Ottoman Special Organisation: '*Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa*', which was established by Enver Paşa in November 1913 to battle insurgents in the Balkans.¹⁹ It was initially hoped that the organisation would remain under Enver's control, although on the surface there was little to suggest that the insurgents were working for the Ottoman Empire. The Caucasus Revolutionary Committee, which was associated with the Special Organisation to perform counter activities in Iran and Russia, particularly in the Caucasus, so as to free the region from Russian control, had recruited dozens of Circassians from Anatolia to implement its policies.²⁰ Thus, it is reasonable to suggest that their changing cultural features enabled them to adjust to the regular and irregular armed activities of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic. This situation echoes what they had encountered in previous decades, prior to being exiled to the Ottoman Empire in the 18th and 19th centuries. Their long struggle against Russian occupation, colonisation, and atrocities in the North Caucasus, the difficult conditions of their exile from the North Caucasus to the Ottoman Empire, their struggles to integrate into their new settlements and with their new neighbours toughened their daily conditions.

¹⁹ Michael A. Reynolds, *Shattering Empires : The Clash and Collapse of the Ottoman and Russian Empires, 1908-1918* / (Cambridge, UK ; New York : Cambridge University Press, 2011), 121.

²⁰ Ibid. 121.

These ruthless conditions led a war-like' Circassian 'culture to emerge. In the period post-WWI, dozens of those who fought in the Ottoman army under the Special Organisation returned home. Many of these fighters, such as Anzavur Ahmed, Maan Ali, Çerkes Davut, and Çerkes Bekir, were *alaylı*, who had not studied in military schools and so who did not have well organised connections with the executive of the CUP, as their relationship had been broken with it in the post-WWI period.²¹ Whatever they observed during WWI, made them anti-CUP and therefore the national movement in Ankara. These individuals became the leading figures of the anti-nationalist movement in 1919 and 1920.²² However, huge numbers of Circassians also fought in the national movement for the Ankara government's army, and worked in the bureaucracy, becoming MPs in the assembly.²³

After the Circassian 'golden age' in the Ottoman Empire, under the CUP, from 1908 to 1913 there followed a period of political turmoil and war, and finally the creation of the Turkish nation state. The Circassians then saw their rights becoming increasingly restricted, similar to other religious and ethnic groups in the country, such as Muslims, Christians, Jews, and Kurds in the early republican period. Their position in Turkey contrasted unfavourably with that of the Circassian minorities in surrounding states: for example, in Jordan they had more privileges than some of the other groups, due to their role in the founding of it and special responsibilities as guards of the King; and Israel, where the state had given them full support to protect their identity.²⁴ Meanwhile, in

²¹ Ryan Scott Gingeras, "Imperial Killing Fields: Revolution, Ethnicity and Islam in Western Anatolia, 1913--1938" (PhD Thesis, University of Toronto, 2006). 182-183.

²² There are number of Circassians in the Special Organisation during the WWI, however, after the war, significant number of them took the Ottoman government's side against the nationalists. Gönenli Çerkes Bekir Sıtkı Bey, Anzavur Ahmed, Düzceli Çerkes Maan Ali Bey, Gendarme lieutenant Çerkes Mustafa Bey, Çerkes Ethem, Reşid and Tefik Beys, Istanbul Çerkes lieutenant Çerkes Sadeddin Bey, Gönenli Çerkes Ahmed Bey, Gönenli Çakır Efe, Major Tophaneli Çerkes Hüseyin Bey, Kadıköylü Çerkes Agah Bey, Gönenli Ahmed Bey, see Semih Nafiz Tansu, *Cumhuriyet*, 31 July 1956. 2.

²³ Sefer Berzeg, *Türkiye Kurtuluş Savaşı'nda Çerkes Göçmenleri (II)* (İstanbul: Nart Yayıncılık, 1990); Muhittin Ünal, *Kurtuluş Savaşında Çerkeslerin Rolü* (İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1996).

²⁴ Arsen Avagyan, *Türk Dış Siyasetinde Kuzey Kafkasya Siyasi Muhacereti (1920-1971)* (İstanbul: Belge Yayınları, 2013), 9.

Turkey, the assimilationist policies of the early republican period meant that the Circassians faced the threat of losing their ethnic identities. Unlike the Kurdish identity, which is not only a cultural identity but a political one also, the Circassian identity in Turkey today is far from being a political identity. Although some protests and demonstrations have recently been organised to address the issue of mother-tongue language rights, for the protection of Circassian identity, and to form a party for the 2015 general elections, the majority of Circassian groups' protests and demonstrations are still targeted at Russia. It should also be emphasised that Circassian activism cannot successfully reach the wider audience of Circassians in Turkey. At present, disunity within activist groups and organisations, and internal struggles between these groups and organisations are the main reasons for this limited mobilisation of Circassian society in Turkey.

Moreover, some organisations, such as The Federation of the Caucasian Association (KAFFED) were unhappy with even limited mobilisation against Russia; KAFFED is the largest umbrella organisation representing the Circassians in both Turkey and Russia, limiting problems arising with Russia. Therefore, it is argued here, that as a leading group among Circassian organisations, it seeks to deplete people's energy by organising protests far away from city centres, to emphasise the historical meaning of peripheral cities and places in Turkey that are relevant to the Circassian exile. For example, it organised a 'commemoration day' in 2014, 2015 and 2016 for the Circassian exile, on 21st of May 1864, in the small town of İzmit, Samsun and Kartal/Istanbul, since this was where the first Circassians came after the exile and where many lost their lives from lack of food and diseases. There are no attempts to organise commemorations in the centre of the larger municipalities, such as Istanbul and Ankara.

It is also important to underline that the ambivalent policy of the Turkish state towards the Circassians is another factor preventing a better understanding of their

situation in Turkey in the early republican period and its aftermath. On the one hand, the state prohibited the expression of Circassian identity in public spaces, and banned the language. However, on the other hand, Circassian refugees arriving from Turkey in the 1920s after the Bolshevik Russian expansion into the North Caucasus, along with their political associations with North Caucasian Emigrants in Europe, were both utilised by several departments of state from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as associated with the intelligence services, in order to strengthen Turkey's position against Soviet Russia.²⁵ As part of this policy, a number of Circassians and North Caucasian Emigrants were employed in Turkish intelligence, and by military and police departments, particularly during the Democratic Party's reign in the 1950s.

In view of the above, it can be stated that because of the rapprochement between the Turkish state and North Caucasian Emigrants, and the recruitment of them into the intelligence, military and police forces, the Circassians gained some freedoms. They were the first group, along with the Azeris, permitted by the state to open a cultural association in the republican period (in 1946).²⁶ After elimination of the threat posed in the early republican period by groups of Circassians, both inside and outside Turkey, and following reconciliation, the Circassians had relatively better conditions compared than other non-Turkish groups. The Circassians no longer seemed to pose a threat to the state as much as they had in the early republican period. The Cold War period partnership against Soviet Russia also positively predisposed the state to change its policies toward the Circassians. Moreover, as an external community who had settled in Anatolia only 100 years before, they were not expected to be likely to demand an independent political structure in Anatolia.²⁷

²⁵ Ibid. 16-17.

²⁶ Ibid. 18.

²⁷ Ibid. 10.

This study will explore the social characteristics of the Circassian community to understand their reactions to incidents that took place during the period 1918-1938. The class structure was a characteristic feature of this community, and it affected Circassian participation in the Ottoman army. The Circassians can generally be divided into two different classes, *warq* (aristocracy) and *tfokotl* (peasantry).²⁸ The existence of slavery and the class structure continued, even after the Circassians converted to Islam and were exiled to the Ottoman Empire. The system of slavery among the Circassian community was employed by the Ottomans when incorporating them as soldiers into the Ottoman military. Due to the increase in the slave trade in the 19th century from the North Caucasus to the empire, the Circassians were considered key human resources, able to fill the empire's needs. This meant they were able to move to the higher echelons of the Ottoman military and bureaucracy, until recruitment practices altered to incorporate professional training during the late 19th century.²⁹ During the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II, a new law was issued by the Porte aiming to abolish slavery and recruit manumitted slaves into the military. According to this new legislation, the state would pay the price of the slave to the owner, and then the slave would be recruited into the army assuming the owner accepted.³⁰ This policy increased the number of Circassian foot soldiers in the Ottoman military. There were also Circassians from upper-class Circassian families who joined the Ottoman army and royal military school, becoming a new elite Circassian class in the Ottoman Empire, while representing other 'lower class' Circassians, using them to solidify their own position at the centre of the empire. This situation provided an opening for the Circassians in their new country. The Circassian elites became part of the power

²⁸ Walter Richmond, *The Northwest Caucasus; Past, present, future* (London: Routledge, 2008), 21. Also, see the impact of the class structure in the diaspora, Eiji Miyazawa, *Memory Politics; Circassians of Uzunyayla, Turkey* (Unpublished PhD Thesis, SOAS University of London, ND.)

²⁹ Ryan Gingeras, "The Sons of Two Fatherlands: Turkey, the Soviet Union and the North Caucasian Diaspora, 1918-1923," *European Journal of Turkish Studies [Online]*, 2011, 3,4.

³⁰ Ehud R. Toledano, "Ottoman Concepts of Slavery in the Period of Reform (1830s-1880s)," in Martin A Klein, *Breaking the Chains: Slavery, Bondage and Emancipation in Modern Africa and Asia* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 44.

centre, and other, lower class Circassians, became either villagers or foot soldiers. Nonetheless, scholars have argued that slavery affected some enslaved families even during the war of independence period (1919-1922), during which time enslaved families fought the nationalists, in response to their owners' opposition to the nationalists.³¹ Undoubtedly, the elites benefited from this situation until the end of that patron-client system at the beginning of the 1920s.

Notably, however the Circassians already had a long history of interaction with the Ottoman Empire. Long before they moved to the empire en masse, their women served as slaves in the Ottoman harem. Girls were kidnapped, sold or sent by slave traders or their families who aimed to make them part of the Ottoman aristocracy, something which rings true, particularly for the Abkhazian and Ubikh tribes. This occasion provided opportunities for some Circassians to become part of the Ottoman Empire via the harem.

This thesis will also focus on class structure and slavery among the Circassians, and the harem as an institution used by both the Porte and Circassian elites. The Porte used slavery both to meet its need for white women slaves for the harem and to move Circassian men into the military. The Abkhazians and Ubikhs, in particular, used the harem and military to obtain positions inside the empire, as they had a more distinct hierarchical social structure than the other Circassian tribes. The existence of Circassian women in the harem provided an important means for the Circassians to enter the Ottoman bureaucracy and the military. Circassian slave girls became concubines and wives of high-ranking bureaucrats and military men, even the Sultan. The latter role was an important one for a slave girl and her family. She could become the mother of a prince, or a *şehzade*, which would then have a positive impact on her relatives' careers in the

³¹ Gingeras, "Imperial Killing Fields: Revolution, Ethnicity and Islam in Western Anatolia, 1913--1938." 42.

Ottoman military and bureaucracy.³² This was the case for Anzavur Ahmed,³³ whose sister was one of the wives of Abdülhamid II; he was raised to the rank of *Paşa*.

2- The Aims and the Central Questions of the Thesis

Although there was general chaos throughout Anatolia after 1918, it should be underlined that this thesis limits its scope to central and western Anatolia. On the eastern front, nationalist forces struggled against the Armenian army. Whereas, in southern Anatolia, the French army, with the help of local Armenian bands, also aimed to effect an occupation. Moreover, throughout Anatolia, local conflicts between bands, local forces, the police and the gendarme were widespread. To study all these regions and conflicts is beyond the scope of this thesis, which focuses principally on key important western and central Anatolian conflicts involving Circassians. Specifically, the Yozgat, Ankara, Düzce, Adapazarı, İzmit, Gönen, Manyas are included, as these places were where incidents broke out. The Anzavur, the Adapazarı-Düzce, the Yozgat, the Çerkes Ethem incidents, the attempt to prepare for Circassian autonomy under Greek occupation, the Gönen-Manyas deportations, and the Circassian opposition to the Kemalist regime, are the topics highlighted and studied in this thesis.

During the republican period, the state and its institutions failed to allow academics and researchers to study the bloody Turkish War of Independence, or the early republican period in any detail with objectivity. Until the early 2000s, the controversial topics of this transformative period, from empire to nation state, were off-limits to independent researchers inside Turkey. The authoritarian approach of the state to this topic created a barrier to researchers. Those who tried to circumvent it were punished by

³² Ibid. 48.

³³ Anzavur Ahmed (1885-1921) was a Circassian, and a member of Ottoman Special organisation, *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa*, during the Great War, he was suggested by (Met, Janutuko) Yusuf İzzet Paşa and Çerkes Üzeyir Bey to the Special Organisation. See Semih Nafiz Tansu, *Cumhuriyet Newspaper*, 31 July 1956. 2 Later on he was made a Paşa by Damat Ferid government in March 1920.

the state. For example, economist Fikret Başkaya, who wrote a well-known and critical book on Kemalism and the early republican period,³⁴ sentenced to 20 months in prison, according to counter-terrorism law in 1993. This was because the book criticised Kemalism from a leftist perspective, arguing that the Kemalist movement was no more than a Bonapartist and pragmatic movement. Incongruously, a journalist, Hakan Albayrak, was also sentenced for claiming in his column that the Islamic funeral prayer was not practised when Atatürk died, even though eight days later he corrected his earlier comment and said that the Islamic funeral prayer was practised. He was sentenced to 15 months under the law ‘Crimes against Atatürk’ in 2004.³⁵ In the last decade, however, a great number of books have been published relating to this period, describing the experiences of the different religious and ethnic groups of Turkey; the majority being ‘popular’ history books. Indeed, this is another problem; i.e. the lack of academic investigation regarding topics considered divisive inside Turkey. While there are a number of books that have been published describing the most significant non-Turkish elements inside the country, namely the Kurds, there are a dearth of academic studies relating to the Circassians of Turkey.

This thesis aims to bring about a new perspective on the existing historiography. Although over recent decades there have been some worthy novel discussions relating to Kemalist historiography in both TV shows and popular history magazines, there has been limited historiography originating from the academic domain. This thesis aims to create new ground in this area, focusing in detail on the political and historical context for the emergence of the activities of Çerkes Ethem³⁶ and Anzavur Ahmed, the incidents of the

³⁴ Fikret Başkaya, *Paradigmanın İflası : Resmi İdeolojinin Eleştirisine Giriş : Batılılaşma, Kalkınma, çağdaşlaşma* /; (İstanbul : Özgür Üniversite, 2012).

³⁵ ‘Atatürk’ün cenaze namazı, gazeteciye 15 ay hapis cezasına mal oldu` 21.04.2004.
<http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/2004/04/21/446534.asp> accessed 21.08.2015.

³⁶ He was a former agent in the Ottoman Special Organisation, one of the leading paramilitary leaders in South Marmara in the days following the Great War, of Circassian descent, born in Emreköy/Balıkesir (1886–1950).

Gönen and Manyas exiles, and the Circassian opposition to the Kemalist regime and its repressive policies over the Circassians during the single party periods. With few exceptions, none of these topics could hitherto be, or have been studied, with objectivity by either the Turkish academy or internationally.³⁷ With some exceptions, existing works were heavily influenced by the Turkish ‘one nation’ ideology, based on Kemalism. Thus, either they ignore the presence of the aforementioned issues, or accept them only to then bring them to view at a shallow level, with discussions regarding who was ‘progressive’ or ‘backward’ in the conflict. The thesis will magnify the presence of the Circassians in this specific period of Ottoman history, 1918-1938, showing how after World War I, the era that witnessed the transformation from empire to nation-state was a painful experience for people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds.

In the broader context, the thesis will utilise concepts relating to theories of civil war and political loyalty, asking the following questions: Where do the Ottoman/Turkish or loyalist/nationalist³⁸ struggles and civil war fit into a worldwide context? What were the dynamics at play, in terms of the shifting loyalties among Circassian elites and ordinary people, for both the state and their ethnic identity during this period?

Civil war has been defined as armed conflict leading to at least one thousand deaths.³⁹ It is typically a struggle between different groups or authority-wielders within the

³⁷ Erik Jan Zürcher, *The Unionist Factor : The Role of the Committee of Union and Progress in the Turkish National Movement, 1905-1926* / (Leiden : Brill, 1984). Ryan Gingeras, “Notorious Subjects, Invisible Citizens: North Caucasian Resistance to the Turkish National Movement in Northwestern Anatolia, 1919-23,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 40, no. 1 (February 2008): 89–108. Ryan Gingeras, *Sorrowful Shores : Violence, Ethnicity, and the End of the Ottoman Empire, 1912-1923* /, Oxford Studies in Modern European History. (Oxford ; New York : Oxford University Press, 2009). Ryan Gingeras, “Last Rites for a ‘Pure Outlaw’: Clandestine Service, Historiography and the Origins of the Turkish ‘Deep State,’” *Past and Present*, no. 206 (February 2010): 121–44. Gingeras, “The Sons of Two Fatherlands: Turkey, the Soviet Union and the North Caucasian Diaspora, 1918-1923.” Zeynel Abidin Besleney, *The Circassian Diaspora in Turkey : A Political History* /, Routledge Studies in Middle Eastern Politics ; (London : Routledge, 2014).

³⁸ ‘Loyalist’ is defined as those who were on the side of the Sultan/Caliph and the Istanbul government, ‘Nationalist’ or ‘Kemalist’ are ones who supported the movement based in Anatolia and who fought against the Greek occupation. However, Kemalism in that period as a term did not have any secularist and/or authoritarian meanings; such features emerged after 1927.

³⁹ Nicholas Sambanis, “Partition as a Solution to Ethnic War: An Empirical Critique of the Theoretical Literature” in *World Politics*, Volume 52.4, (July 2000), downloaded from <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/wp/summary/v052/52.4sambanis.html> on 09 August 2013, 444.

boundaries of a state.⁴⁰ It is possible to state that civil war can be divided in two categories: ‘old’ and ‘new’ civil wars. In old civil wars, there were mutual political aspirations for participants whose aims were delineated clearly from the outset.⁴¹ Violence was not venerated; it was merely accepted as a necessary stepping-stone to attain the political aims of the group.⁴² In contemporary civil wars, on the other hand, a clearly delineated aim emerges among interested groups. The struggle for leadership and the lack of hierarchy within groups has also been a problem in contemporary civil wars.⁴³ These factors all contribute to uncertainty in the struggle between different groups and authorities.

Former civil wars and violence in period 1918-1923 were widespread in Europe. The suggestion that Turkey underwent a civil war, despite its rejection by mainstream Turkish historians, is not a concept unique to Ottoman-Turkish history in the post-WWI era. Civil war and domestic violence were prevalent across the European continent from Russia to Britain, Spain, and the Ottoman Empire during 1918-1923. At the beginning of the Great War, the conflict was between states and their armies, as had traditionally occurred. However, after the war, violence was directed principally against civilians and interstate actors by their own governments.⁴⁴ The widespread use of violence turned this war into a ‘European civil war’,⁴⁵ as the worsening conditions brought about by warfare, conflicts between revolutionaries and counter-revolutionaries spread across the continent.⁴⁶ In Russia, for example, there was the conflict between the Red, White, and Green armies at the end of the Great War. In Italy, the territorial and economic profits gained during WWI were insufficient to satisfy the nationalist fervour of some Italians.

⁴⁰ Ibid. 444.

⁴¹ Ibid. 444.

⁴² Ibid. 444.

⁴³ Ibid. 444.

⁴⁴ James Mcmillan, “War in Political Violence” in *Political Violence in Twentieth – Century Europe* ed. Donald Bloxham, Robert Gerwarth (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 58.

⁴⁵ Enzo Traverso, *A feu et à sang: De la guerre civile européenne 1914-1945* (Paris: Stock, 2007), 129 quoted in James Mcmillan, “War in Political Violence” , 58.

⁴⁶ Enzo Traverso, *A feu et à sang*, 71 quoted in James Mcmillan, “War in Political Violence”, 64.

Their disappointment resulted in violence, and would eventually bring Mussolini to power.⁴⁷ In Britain, soldiers joined in riots, which erupted in January and August of 1919 in major cities.⁴⁸ There was also a struggle between the Irish nationalists and the British army in Northern Ireland at this time.⁴⁹

One can observe similarities between the two great multinational empires; the Russian and the Ottoman Empires. Generally speaking, the Ottomans and Russians comprised the two main rival groups competing for power inside the empire during this period. Both empires experienced civil wars, fought by those who supported the existing regimes: the White army in Russia against the Bolsheviks, and the loyalists in Turkey against the nationalists.⁵⁰ The creation of a narrative (historiography) was also important for both the empires of the successor states of. It can be said that all the leaders: Lenin, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, and Stalin, worked on the production of a ‘national history’ for their countries, viewing themselves as ‘revolutionary leaders’. The writing of the nation’s history was considered a necessity by the leaders and politicians of the authoritarian states.⁵¹ The civil wars (or ‘rebellions’ as they are termed in official Turkish historiography) were framed by the leaders in the official school history text books and their own memoirs as demonstrating the ‘backwardness’ of the old regimes and their supporters.⁵² In the post war period, when the Bolsheviks and Kemalists seized the power necessary to realise their agenda, the state was seen as the chief instrument of social and economic transformation,

⁴⁷ James Mcmillan, “War in Political Violence”, 65.

⁴⁸ Ibid. 65.

⁴⁹ Ibid. 65.

⁵⁰ J.F.N Bradley, *Civil War in Russia 1917-1920* (London: BT Batsford, 1975). In the Ottoman context it cannot be said that at the beginning the nationalists were initially against the Sultan; they were in fact against the supporters of the Sultan. The Sultan in many ways was seen as above this conflict.

⁵¹ Büşra Ersanlı, *İktidar ve Tarih* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2003), 108.

⁵² For the Soviet side of this historiography see M. Gorky, V. Molotov, K. Voroshilov, S. Kirov, A. Zhdanov, J. Stalin, *The History of the Civil War in the U.S.S.R.* Volume 1, (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1936). For the Kemalist side, see Gazi Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), *Nutuk* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1981). *Tarih IV. Kemalist Eğitimin Tarih Dersleri 1931 – 1941* (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2004).

and both were based on single party regimes and statist economic policies.⁵³ Although this study focuses mainly on the transformation of Turkey from an empire to a nation state, using the Circassians as the case study, it also examines their political and paramilitary activism, and the importance of their presence as an influential factor effecting both sides in the civil war, fought between the Istanbul and Ankara governments.

The second central question of the thesis concerns how Circassian political loyalty changed during this transformative period. Although the Circassians relied on the Ottoman Sultan for their patronage, considering that after the Great War political authority was represented by two governments, the Ottoman Porte in Istanbul as a *de jure* government, and the Ankara government as a *de facto* one, the loyalty of the Circassian people was, contrary to traditional accounts, split between the two governments. The ordinary Circassian people, generally speaking, supported the loyalists, while the majority of the military elites and the CUP members backed the nationalists. It is also possible to assert that for some of the Circassian elites, the loyalty of their ethnic Circassian identity later became more vital and pronounced. As will be shown in this thesis, they tried to set up an autonomous Circassian state under Greek occupation as a buffer zone between the Greeks and Turks in 1921. Until that time, Circassian identity and its loyalties to the Ottoman State were not in conflict. The concept of Ottoman identity, which was in fact a multinational identity, allowed the Circassians to identify themselves clearly. However, after the Greek occupation, some of the Circassian elites thought that the Ottoman State's days were limited, and that the time had arrived for them to establish an autonomous structure under Greek occupation. This was partly because they feared that if they returned to central Anatolia, the nationalists of Ankara would not

⁵³ Charles King, *Midnight at the Pera Palace : The Birth of Modern Istanbul* /, First edition. (New York : W.W. Norton and Company, 2014), 224, 225.

give them sufficient space within the new state and would execute them for their opposition to Ankara.⁵⁴ They decided to take a step based on the Wilsonian principles⁵⁵ popular at the time, and set up an autonomous Circassian state structure. However, this decision was not supported by vast majority of the Circassians.

3- Literature Review

The liberal atmosphere of the post-constitutional revolution that affected the Ottoman Empire in 1908 did not last long. The independence of Bulgaria, the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina by Austria, the occupation of Tripoli by Italy and the war between Italy and the Ottoman Empire, not to mention the Balkan Wars, fundamentally changed the atmosphere in the empire between 1908 and 1913. The liberal ideas of the 1908 revolution were sidestepped by the CUP, which toughened its rules concerning opposition and the subjects of the empire, by restricting them to maintain the territorial integrity of the empire.⁵⁶ However, the collapse of the Ottoman Empire had been predicted by its rivals before WWI.⁵⁷ Germany and Russia had plans for its dismantling, which would have seen them to share its territory.⁵⁸ However, they preferred to postpone this dismantlement as long as possible, until they would be ready to take its place.

From 1908 onwards, groups with different ethnic and national identities came to the stage in the Ottoman Empire with the rise of nationalism and the relatively limited success of the idea of 'Ottomanism' as a collective identity, encompassing all nationality groups in the empire. With the exception of the various Anatolian groups, the members

⁵⁴ Group of Circassian attempted to set up an autonomous state under the Greek rule in 1922. See chapter 5.

⁵⁵ This is known as the 'Fourteen Points' declared by the President of United States, Woodrow Wilson, in 1918. Article 12 mentions self-determination for non-Turkish people of the Ottoman Empire. See http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/wilson14.asp.

⁵⁶ Eugene Rogan, *The Fall of the Ottomans: The Great War in the Middle East* / (New York : Basic Books, 2015), 23,24.

⁵⁷ Mustafa Aksakal, *The Ottoman Road to War in 1914 : The Ottoman Empire and the First World War* /, Cambridge Military Histories (New York : Cambridge University Press, 2008), 66-68.

⁵⁸ Ibid. 66-77.

of different nationality groupings produced their own independent states in the following decades, in the Balkans and the Middle East; namely, Montenegro, Bulgaria, Albania, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and the Gulf countries. The majority of non-Muslim Anatolian groups, such as the Armenians and Rums, were either exiled forcibly from Anatolia or exchanged for the Muslim population of the Balkans. A number of works already exist concerning Ottoman nationalities and the activities of these groups with regard to the process of creating their own nation states.

However, there are a limited number of studies concerning their non-Turkish Muslim counterparts. The Kurds, Albanians, Bosnians, the Laz, and the Circassians of Anatolia were all subject to the assimilationist policies of the new republican regime espousing Kemalism. The absence of academic works on the activities of these groups means it is challenging to understand the intricacies of the period in depth. It is not possible to argue that there are adequate works on these groups, particularly the Circassians. Although their case was unique in the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, they shared some similarities with the civil war in Russia and the other non-Turkish groups of the Ottoman Empire.

It is further, useful to understand the Turkish civil war in a broader historical context, by comparing it with another civil war, in this case the one taking place in Russia. Similar to the Kemalists in Turkey, the Bolsheviks believed that their revolution in October 1917 signified a radical break with the past necessitating the establishment of a new order in the country. There were some striking similarities between the Russian and Ottoman civil wars, and interestingly, both victors in the civil wars, namely the Bolsheviks and Kemalists, used similar terminologies to depict them. Concepts implying 'progress' and 'reaction' led to those supporting them being termed progressive, and those against them labelled backward, reactionary, or loyal to previous regimes. This

terminology framed the boundaries of the political language in domestic politics for many decades to come in Turkey.⁵⁹

Kurds provide an example of a non-Turkish group that encountered similar experiences to the Circassians in the late Ottoman and early republican period. From the 19th century up to the contemporary era, two periods have held a significant place in the history of the Kurdish people in terms of their relationships with the Ottoman political authorities, and their political mobilisation. The first period is the Hamidian period (1876-1909), during which, Sultan Abdülhamid II (1842-1918) tried to centralise the state as much as he possibly could, as part of his response to modernisation. However, to carry out these policies he played different ethnic and religious groups against one another to gain firmer control over the empire. Janet Klein explores how Kurdish tribal groups, and Circassian groups from the same unit, were used by the Hamidian government and its successor Young Turk government during the period 1890 to 1914. The Hamidian cavalry was also used to control East of Anatolia for the government.⁶⁰

It is also important to mention the emergence of Kurdish nationalism and nationalist movements. In particular, the post-Young Turk revolution phase now holds the same significance in the history of Kurdish nationalism as it does in relation to the issue of Circassian political mobilisation. The impact of the Young Turk revolution of 1908 on Kurdish Nationalism, the post-World War relationship between the Kurds and the Ottoman State, as well as that with the British forces, was also studied in Robert Olson's book.⁶¹ He depicted the emergence of Kurdish nationalism, noting its historical roots

⁵⁹ J.F.N Bradley, *Civil War in Russia 1917-1920* (London: BT Batsford, 1975), Peter Holquist, *Making War, Forging Revolution; Russia's Continuum of Crisis 1914-1921* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2002), V.P. Butt, A.B. Murphy, N.A. Myshov, *The Russian Civil War; Documents from the Soviet Archives* (London: Macmillan Press, 1996) Also see the other important books on the topic; Evan Mawdsley, *The Russian Civil War* (Edinburg: Birlinn Limited, 2008). Geoffrey Swain, *Russia's Civil War* (Gloucestershire: Tempus, 2000).

⁶⁰ Jane Klein, *The Margins of Empire; Kurdish Militias in the Ottoman Tribal Zone* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011).

⁶¹ Robert Olson, *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion, 1880 – 1925* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989).

dating from the days of provincial leaders in the Ottoman Empire to the Sheikhs of 19th and 20th century and the nationalist-secularist intellectuals of the post-Young Turk revolution era. Olson also explored Kurdish activism in South East Anatolia during the post Great War period, until the early republican period.

One of the most significant books of the period relating to the activities of the Circassians, and the post-Balkan War in Anatolia during the period covered here, is Ryan Gingeras' *Sorrowful Shores: Violence, Ethnicity and the End of the Ottoman Empire, 1912-1923*.⁶² This book was one of the first to follow an alternative approach to the internal struggles in Anatolia during the Turkish-Greek War of 1919-1922 in detail. Gingeras consulted a number of memoirs written by witnesses during this period and commentated on some of the key protagonists who played a prominent role in the period, as well as relying on archival sources. The majority of these memoirs were published in the 1950s when the multi-party system re-emerged in the country. As mentioned in the book, the community or class structure of the Circassians should be studied to understand their participation in the 'loyalist' and 'nationalist' sides of the conflict. Particularly in terms of their position as a group among the upper-classes who backed the nationalists in Ankara by joining the resistance movement against the Greeks, either as military men or bureaucrats, and in the assembly as MPs; as large numbers of Circassians also supported the loyalists. One of the missing parts of the story in the historiography of this period relates to the internal conflicts that transpired locally in parts of western Anatolia, a place that Gingeras also focuses on in his book.

Arsen Avangyan's book also provides a useful introduction; it is based on Russian archival material, as well as secondary Russian and Turkish sources.⁶³ However,

⁶² Ryan Gingeras, *Sorrowful Shores : Violence, Ethnicity, and the End of the Ottoman Empire, 1912-1923* /, Oxford Studies in Modern European History. (Oxford ; New York : Oxford University Press, 2009).

⁶³ Arsen Avangyan, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Kemalist Türkiye'nin Devlet-İktidar Sisteminde Çerkesler; XIX. yüzyılın ilk yarısından XX. yüzyılın ilk çeyreğine*. çev. Ludmilla Denisenko, (İstanbul: Belge Uluslararası Yayıncılık, 2004).

Avangyan did not adequately emphasise the internal struggles that took place among Circassians or their relationship with authorities, when showing the main differences between the CUP and Kemalist eras. Moreover, the book does not mention the impact the 'Kemalist-Nation Building' project had on the Circassians. At times, the author also exaggerates the Circassian presence in the Ottoman-Turkish political and military structures. A further important work that enhances our understanding of the Circassian presence in the Ottoman-Turkish historical and political structure is Zeynel Besleney's recent book, *The Circassian Diaspora in Turkey: A Political History*.⁶⁴ The book focuses on the political activities and activism of the Circassians as a diaspora community, from the beginning of the multiparty period (1950), concentrating particularly on the early 2000s to the early 2010s.⁶⁵

In the single party period, even the existence of a Circassian identity was ignored by the state.⁶⁶ Indeed, one of the reasons why the Circassians were oppressed in the early republican era was because they were seen as the remnants of the *ancient regime* by the Republican elites. As Ahmet Kuru has extensively studied, the ancient regime represented the Ottoman Empire and its values in the republican context of Turkey.⁶⁷ Circassians, as the single biggest opponents to the Ankara government in the early 1920s, were associated with the Ottoman past of Turkey, and one group of them represented the CUP's opposition to the Kemalists in the early republican era. At this time, as Charles King

⁶⁴ Besleney, *The Circassian Diaspora in Turkey*.

⁶⁵ There has been an acceleration of Circassian political activism in the last decade in Turkey and other countries where Circassians reside, namely Jordan, Israel, Germany, the Netherlands and the USA. With the increasing usage of the term 'Circassian Genocide' instead of 'Circassian exile' to describe the 19th century atrocities committed by Russia towards the Circassians, activists have been able to mobilise more Circassians in Turkey. On the day of the 'Circassian Genocide', May 21, a few thousand Circassians come together in front of the Russian Embassy in Istanbul to collectively remember their exile and to protest against Russia. The number of protesters increases every year.

⁶⁶ Gingeras, "The Sons of Two Fatherlands: Turkey, the Soviet Union and the North Caucasian Diaspora, 1918-1923." 12.

⁶⁷ Ahmet T. Kuru, *Secularism and State Policies toward Religion : The United States, France, and Turkey* /, Cambridge Studies in Social Theory, Religion, and Politics. (Cambridge ; New York : Cambridge University Press, 2009), 14.

argues, even God had been nationalised;⁶⁸ the intention was then to assimilate the Circassians into the new nation to prevent them from expressing their identity, which meant a ban on using their mother-tongue language in public. Until the Democrat Party came to power in 1950, after which the Circassians and state reconciled, the Turkish state viewed them with suspicion.

As Ali Birinci demonstrates in his book,⁶⁹ one should look to the pre-WWI period of the Ottoman Empire to understand the nationalist-anti nationalist division of the post-1919 period comprehensively. It is argued here that the division was mainly a product of the CUP-Liberal Entente⁷⁰ dispute that took place from 1911 to 1914. Some key figures from the Liberal Entente were later added to the '*Yüzellilikler*'⁷¹ list by the Kemalists, such as Gümülcineli İsmail Bey, Rıza Tevfik (Bölükbaşı), Tokat MP Mustafa Sabri Efendi, and Konyalı Zeynel Abidin Efendi. The Liberal Entente party believed during the pre-WWI period that the Ottoman State should not go against the British, believing that Britain was becoming a new political centre in Europe. Furthermore, they believed that Britain would be an important ally for the empire, rather than the Germans.⁷² It is important to mention here that outside Istanbul, the Liberal Entente gained the support of the ulema, and focused on the local shop owners *Esnaf* and villagers, who were broadly disregarded by the CUP, a party reliant on the support of the military, state officials and landowners.⁷³

There were also many people within the party that were excluded from the military and administration of the empire during the CUP rule.⁷⁴ The CUP believed the only way to keep the empire together was to strengthen the central authority of the state; and yet,

⁶⁸ King, *Midnight at the Pera Palace.*, 191.

⁶⁹ Ali Birinci, *Hürriyet ve İtilâf Fırkası : II. Meşrutiyet Devrinde İttihat ve Terakki'ye Karşı çıkanlar /* (Çemberlitaş, İstanbul : Dergâh Yayınları, 2012).

⁷⁰ Liberal Entente was established in 1912 as a political party.

⁷¹ Those who declared as 'Traitor' or *personae non gratae* by the Turkish Republic in 1924.

⁷² Birinci, *Hürriyet ve İtilâf Fırkası*, 66-68.

⁷³ Ibid. 97, 98, 238-240.

⁷⁴ Ibid. 97, 98.

members of Liberal Entente argued that only decentralisation could unite the empire.⁷⁵ After the Bab-ı Ali raid, carried out against prominent CUP figures of the Liberal Entente wing (i.e. Kamil Paşa, Cemaleddin Efendi, Sadık Bey, Rıza Nur, Ali Kemal, and Mustafa Sabri) and hundreds of opponents of the CUP, they were forced to leave the empire as the CUP attempted to force political exile on all its opponents.⁷⁶ Although there is no any direct connection between the pre-WWI Liberal Entente and post-WWI Liberal Entente, those who suffered under the CUP rule until the end of WWI came to Istanbul after the CUP leaders had left the city to take their revenge on the CUP.

One also has to mention Ahmet Efe's two books on the period that this present study is interested in. The first book relates to Çerkes Ethem and his activities.⁷⁷ It is one of the more detailed books by Çerkes Ethem and often presents issues in a nuanced way. However, the approach taken by the author is very problematic, and his research is overshadowed by his propensity to promote conspiracy theories. Ahmet Efe offers a very sceptical approach, prone to generalisation without sufficient emphasis on demonstrating proof. For example, Efe argues that because Ethem kidnapped the some of the governor of İzmir in 1919, the British gained the opportunity it needed to implement article 7 of the Mudros Armistice, which gave the Allies the right to occupy any place in Anatolia that caused them security problems. However, in the book, Efe does not give any proof that the Allies in fact used the kidnapping as a pretext to occupy Anatolia.⁷⁸ Furthermore, one of his conspiracy theories is certainly a masterful work of fiction. According to Efe, Sheik Shamil was a very close friend of the Queen of England and, therefore, during the Circassian exile in mid-19th century, the exiles were directed by the British to the Marmara region, because the British had planned to set up a buffer zone here 60 years previously to maintain the security of the region. Efe's failure to review the Ottoman

⁷⁵ Ibid. 72.

⁷⁶ Ibid. 213, 229.

⁷⁷ Ahmet Efe, *Çerkez Ethem* (İstanbul: Bengi Kitap Yayın, 2009).

⁷⁸ Ibid. 32, 33.

Archive, coupled with his lack of knowledge about the settlement of the Circassians into the empire by the Ottoman government in the 19th century, led to his lack of knowledge on the topic. His second book⁷⁹ is similar to his first in terms of its excessive details and level of research. In its approach to the period, it seems that Ahmet Efe wrote the book in response to Philip Stoddard's PhD thesis⁸⁰ and Cemal Kutay's books and writings about Kuşçubaşı Eşref Bey, rather than aiming to produce an original and evidenced argument.

The existing historiography of this period in Turkey's history is very problematic for a number of reasons. The Turkish War of Independence is still treated as a movement supported by most people, except those who were 'backward' or 'collaborators' with the 'Greek occupiers'. However, recent studies show that local dynamics varied massively from district to district, and among different ethnic groups. For South Marmara, the relationship between the state and the residents of the region was already strained following the Great War, particularly due to the disastrous results of the war on the Anatolian people, which included epidemics and food shortages.⁸¹ The existing situation weakened the state's authority in this region and led to an increase in intra-regional struggles between the Turks, Circassians, Albanians and some Greeks, a significant number of whom were exiled or deported during the war. In particular, the origins of the Circassian-Albanian conflicts during the 1900s were among the most serious for the region. Moreover, until the Battle of Sakarya in 1921, the resistance movement was not expected to succeed against the Greek army, as it was supported by the Allies. The region was ruled by the Greek authorities for more than two years, which shows that further

⁷⁹ Ahmet Efe, *Kuşçubaşı Eşref* (İstanbul: Bengi Kitap Yayın, 2010).

⁸⁰ Philip H. Stoddard, "The Ottoman Government and the Arabs, 1911 to 1918: A Preliminary Study of the Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa" (Princeton University, 1963).

⁸¹ Mehmet Beşikçi, *The Ottoman Mobilisation of Manpower in the First World War; Between Voluntarism and Resistance* (Leiden: Brill, 2012). Yücel Yanıkdağ, '*Ill-Fated*' Son of the 'Nation': *The Ottoman Prisoners of War in Russia and Egypt, 1914-1922* (Unpublished PhD Thesis, The Ohio State University, 2002). Yücel Yanıkdağ, "Ottoman Prisoners of War in Russia, 1914-1922" *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Jan., 1999), 69-85.

scholarly research is still necessary to understand local anti-resistance movement activities and the population's relationship with the Greek authorities fully.

4- Chapters of the Thesis

The first chapter of the thesis is the introduction.

The second chapter examines Circassian participation in the civil war period from 1919-1920; i.e. the so-called period of 'National Struggle'. Although this was largely a war between Greek and Turkish troops, there were several battles fought between the followers of the Nationalists and the Loyalists. Both sides used paramilitaries as a tool to achieve control over the country. Çerkes Ethem and Anzavur Ahmed were two important leaders at this time. Çerkes Ethem, the majority of whose soldiers were Circassians, was influential in suppressing the movements against the nationalists of Ankara, from South Marmara to Central Anatolia. Meanwhile, another Circassian, Anzavur Ahmed, also had a significant impact on the Circassians, as a leading figure responsible for mobilising the Muslims of the South Marmara against the *Kuva-yi Milliye*,⁸² while emphasising Islamic solidarity among the people of the empire. This chapter further argues that because the people of the region felt a large degree of war weariness, Ahmed Anzavur gained their support following a successful propaganda drive. He mobilised the Circassians of the region using his internal ethnic network, and its religious population, using their emotional attachment to the Ottoman Sultan and the Caliphate.

The third chapter focuses on the Adapazarı-Düzce incidents, the Yozgat incident, and in response to these two incidents the pro-nationalist activities of Çerkes Ethem and

⁸² *Kuva-yi Milliye* means 'national forces', the irregular troops of the Ankara government. I also use nationalist, Anatolian movement and resistance movement to refer to that. They generally comprised of irregular troops, paramilitary groups and bandits. They were used by the nationalists (after April 1920, the Great Assembly of Ankara) against loyalists and the Greek occupation. The conflict between loyalists and the *Kuva-yi Milliye* has been regarded as 'infighting' rather than a civil war in Turkish republican historiography. On the other hand, 'Anti- *Kuva-yi Milliye* `anti-nationalists` refer to the people those who loyal to the Sultan/Caliph in Istanbul. However, in the beginning, Ankara government especially Mustafa Kemal attempted to convince people by saying that they were not against to the Sultan and caliphate.

his growing impact on the political problems facing the Ankara government. The Düzce–Hendek region proved to be a major battlefield between the Circassians who supported the Istanbul government, and those who supported the Ankara government.⁸³ The loyalist Circassians of the Adapazarı-Düzce region rose against Ankara, attempting to seize control over the region. Due to Ankara’s lack of an effective military force, Çerkes Ethem was called upon to suppress the incident. In doing so, he caused an internal Circassian conflict in Düzce that resulted in about 50 people involved in the incidents being hanged. At the same time, Ankara was threatened by another disorder in Yozgat, led by a local landowner from the Çapanoğlu family. Ethem was invited once more by Ankara to repress disorder in Yozgat. This chapter argues that Ethem increased his military and political power in Anatolia and Ankara, particularly in the assembly, through his suppression of these three incidents (Anzavur, Adapazarı-Düzce and Yozgat) which in effect saved the national movement from destruction by Istanbul backed incidents in Anatolia.

The fourth chapter focuses on the exclusion of Ethem from the nationalist cause in relation to the Enver Paşa -Mustafa Kemal conflicts, and the impact of the so-called Green Army Society on this. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the increasing political and military power of Ethem concerned Mustafa Kemal and İsmet (İnönü), mainly because they wanted Ethem to act as a military man only. However, political opposition against Mustafa Kemal in Ankara, and outside it, from those such as Enver Paşa was worrying; indeed, Enver did eventually attempt to use Ethem against Mustafa Kemal. The supporters of the Green Army had in fact asked Ethem to join the movement, as he already had military power, and it was hoped that this would give the movement increased political influence. From this perspective, Ethem seemed to be more of a threat

⁸³ Çerkes Ethem, *Anılarım* (İstanbul: Berfin Yayınları, 2005), Emrah Cilasun, *Baki İlk Selam* (İstanbul: Agora Kitaplığı, 2009). Efe, *Çerkes Ethem*, Cemal Şener, *Çerkes Ethem Olayı* (İstanbul: Altın Kitaplar, 2007), Zeki Sarıhan, *Çerkes Ethem İhaneti* (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 1998). Uluğ İğdemir, *Biga ayaklanması ve Anzavur olayları: günlük anılar* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1973). Ryan Gingeras, “Notorious Subjects, Invisible Citizens: North Caucasian Resistance to the Turkish National Movement in Northwestern Anatolia, 1919-23.”

to Mustafa Kemal, rather than a manageable military man under his control. Ethem and his brothers' frequent, yet at other times, lenient policies to anti-nationalist groups were also used by Ankara as proof they were harming the nationalist cause. Thus, when Mustafa Kemal decided to change the military order and commanders at the western front in October 1920, a feud broke out between Çerkes Ethem, his brothers Tevfik, Reşit and İsmet, Refet and Mustafa Kemal.

The fifth chapter details the activities of one-time governor of İzmit, Çule İbrahim Hakkı, the Circassian Congress and the Gönen-Manyas deportations. After his relationship with the Istanbul government deteriorated irreparably, İbrahim Hakkı approached the issue of Greek occupation forces in Western Anatolia. He changed his political stance from that of loyal Ottoman Statesman to a believer in Circassian autonomy under the Greek occupation forces in western Anatolia. However, his ambitions were not realised, because notable Circassians and the general mass of the Circassian people did not favour autonomy. This chapter also sheds light on Circassian armed opposition to the Kemalists in western Anatolia during the period 1922-1923, when forces tried to wage a counter-revolution against the Ankara government. It will also focus on the Ankara government's response to this opposition, namely the forceful exiling of 14 Circassian villages from the region, as a form of collective punishment.

The sixth chapter explores the anti-nationalist activities of Circassians from 1924 onwards, and the drawing up by the Ankara Assembly of a list of *personae non gratae* 'Yüzellilikler' in April 1924. Those who were against the nationalists from the beginning, and those who were excluded by the Ankara government engaged in anti-nationalist activities. Although in the past certain groups may have had disagreements, they now had a common enemy: the Kemalists. Çerkes Ethem, Tevfik, Reşit, Kuşçubaşı Eşref, Çerkes Sami, Çule İbrahim Hakkı, and Maan Mustafa, a group of Circassian and Abkhazians from the western Anatolia region and some other Muslims from Anatolia were the driving

opposition force. This opposition first began in the Greek occupied zone of western Anatolia, but then spread beyond Turkey, as members of this group were declared *personae non gratae*. This chapter will also focus on how the list of *personae non gratae* was determined by the Grand Assembly of Turkey, and the motivation behind the decisions made by the assembly, since about 86 of the 150 persons on the list were Circassians. This chapter will also discuss the impact of Kemalist nationalisation and modernisation projects on the Circassians as a distinct non-Turkish Muslim group in the country. The years following the War of Independence saw the Kemalist elite attempt to revive the nation building project proposed by the CUP, while also increasing the authoritarian policies that remained from the previous era. The experience of the first few years was sufficient to persuade the Kemalist elite that the country was unprepared for a pluralistic political system, although it may well be possible to argue that the Kemalist elite had never aimed to implement a pluralistic system in the first place. The prohibition of non-Turkish languages as part of the infamous ‘Citizen, Speak Turkish!’ campaigns, and the exclusion of those with Circassian identity from the public places will also be the focus of this chapter.⁸⁴

Chapter seven will be the conclusion.

⁸⁴ Ahmet Insel (ed.), *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce Cilt 2 / Kemalizm (Ciltli)*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2011). Event Köker, *Modernleşme, Kemalizm ve Demokrasi* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2012). Taha Parla, *Ziya Gökalp, Kemalizm ve Türkiye’de Korporatizm* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2006). Taha Parla, *Türkiye’de Siyasal Kültürün Resmi Kaynakları; Kemalist Tek-Parti İdeolojisi ve CHP’nin Altı Ok’u* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1995). Füsun Üstel, *İmparatorluktan ulus-devlete Türk milliyetçiliği: Türk Ocakları (1912-1931)* (İstanbul: İletişim, 1997). Ahmet Yıldız, *Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyebilene; Türk Ulusal Kimliğinin Etno-Seküler Sınırları (1919-1938)* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001). Cemil Koçak, *Geçmişiniz İtina ile Temizlenir* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2011). Erik Jan Zürcher, *The Young Turk legacy and the national nation building: from the Ottoman Empire to Atatürk’s Turkey* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010).

5- Archives

The author consulted and compiled primary source materials from several archives for this study:

- The military archive ATASE (*Askeri Tarih ve Stratejik Etüt Başkanlığı Arşivleri*) in Ankara, which in the last a few years has increased the numbers of documents it makes available to researchers. This archive has a large collection of correspondence and telegrams passed between the military units, paramilitary groups and local governors during the period 1919-1922.
- The British Public Record Office (PRO), which holds military, intelligence reports, and correspondence between the Istanbul Embassy and the Foreign Office, since Istanbul was under the British occupation for about three years.
- The Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives, BOA (*Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri*) in Istanbul and the Prime Ministry Republican Archives, BCA (*Başbakanlık Cumhuriyet Arşivleri*) in Ankara. These two archives have a large numbers of documents from the Ministry of Interior, the local governors and courts.
- The Ankara University, Turkish Revolution History Archives, TİTE (*Ankara Üniversitesi Türk İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü Arşivi*), which stores military, intelligence reports, correspondence between government units about the period and the Circassians and their political-paramilitary activism, such as Çerkes Ethem and Ahmed Anzavur.
- The Grand National Assembly Archive (*Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi Arşivi*) in Ankara. A web page is now available for online research.⁸⁵
- Atatürk Library's newspaper archive.
- The online archive of *Cumhuriyet*.

⁸⁵ Grand National Assembly Session Records;
https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/tutanak_dergisi_pdfler.meclis_donemleri?v_meclisdonem=0
accessed 13.08.2016.

- The Atatürk Kitaplığı in Istanbul provided access to newspapers pertaining to the period, as the author was able to access this freely. However, although access is unrestricted, a lengthy bureaucratic process was involved in obtaining some data, such as ATASE. One slight problem that arose here was that for certain collections it is only permissible to keep a limited number of documents at any one time (e.g. 100-150 in some cases (ATASE and TİTE)).

An attempt was also made to consult the Turkish National Police Archive, (*Emniyet Genel Müdürlüğü Arşivi*) in Ankara. However, the files on the list of 150 ‘*Yüzellilikler*’ had been recently transferred to the Prime Ministry Republican Archive in Ankara. Although before the transfer, with the permission of the general directorate of police, researchers could gain access to the files in the archive, after the documents were transferred to the Republican archive, access was prohibited by its administrators. It has, however, been possible to include data from books and PhD theses that relied on these records before the transfer in this work.⁸⁶

The information contained in this thesis was also gleaned from personal writings, correspondence and telegrams sent and kept by key military personalities of the period, Bekir Sami (Günsav). These documents will afford greater detail and more information than many of the currently published memoirs of the military and political elites of this period. To understand the grassroots context during this period newspapers are a key source.

⁸⁶ Sedat Bingöl, *150’likler Meselesi (Bir İhanetin Anatomisi)* (İstanbul: Bengi Yayınları, 2010). Şaduman Halıcı, “Yüzellilikler” (Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Anadolu Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 1998).

Chapter Two

‘Rebellion’ or ‘Civil War’: Circassian Paramilitary Activism during the Turkish-Greek War of 1919-1920

Introduction

The domestic problems and conflict affecting the Ottoman State during the period of the Turkish–Greek War (1919-1922) has generally been bypassed by mainstream Turkish historians. Although local opposition(s) to the nationalist resistance⁸⁷ was nuanced inside Anatolia, varying from province to province, and district to district, all regions have generally been viewed indiscriminately by historians as ‘rebellions.’⁸⁸ Mainstream Turkish historians and leading officials of the period have been reluctant to address the issues of domestic conflict and violence in their books and memoirs. Where they do mention conflicts, they underline the ‘ignorance’ and ‘backwardness’ of ‘the rebels’, and their ‘collaboration’ with Greek and British occupiers or the Istanbul government, without fully analysing the reasons behind these mass movements. To define the period as a time of ‘civil war’ is more suitable than referring to it in terms of ‘rebellion’, because the anti-nationalist movement received mass support, and the

⁸⁷ I am using the ‘National Movement, National Resistance’ and ‘*Kuva-yi Milliye*’ interchangeably to refer to the movement against the Greek occupation and headed by Mustafa Kemal, Rauf (Orbay), Ali Fuat Paşa (Cebeşoy), Kazım Paşa (Karabekir), Refet (Bele) in Anatolia, but the meaning of ‘national’ or ‘*milli*’ refers to Ottoman Muslims rather than Turkish ethnicity or Turkish nationalism. The ‘national’ also covers those who lived on the borders declared with the Mudros Armistice in October 1918 and later on in the National Pact of the Ottoman Parliament in February 1920. ‘National’ covers the Turks, Kurds, Circassians, Albanians, Lazs, Arabs, Bosnians as the ‘*Anasır-ı İslam*’ - the elements of Islam. The Sultan and Caliphate were also part of the basic elements of identity for these Muslim elements of the state; shared feelings related cultural and religious affiliations for the Muslims of the empire, more so than any idea of *Türklük* – Turkishness, were vitally important. At the beginning of the period the leading persons of the movement were Ottoman officials. Although there were discussions on Turkishness in the early period of the Assembly, the leading people of the movement, particularly Mustafa Kemal, always referred to the *Anasır-ı İslam* in their speeches instead of emphasizing Turkishness. See the session of the Assembly in 1 May 1920

<http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/TBMM/d01/c001/tbmm01001008.pdf>.

⁸⁸ The incidents generally were referred to as ‘*İç İsyanlar*’ ‘Domestic Rebellions.’ Rebellion as a term is already used to define a domestic problem. It can be said that mainstream Turkish historians used ‘domestic rebellions’ to avoid to using ‘*İç Savaş*’, i.e. the term for ‘Civil War.’

national movement had no absolute and legitimate authority during the period, only taking power as the *de facto* government in Ankara/Anatolia.

WWI led to the almost total destruction of the Ottoman Empire.⁸⁹ Post-war conditions weakened the empire, not only in terms of manpower, population and productivity, but also economically. Inflation rates were high, scarcity of food rife, and chaos widespread in Anatolia. Large numbers of people in the capital, the provinces and the districts opposed the CUP, holding it responsible for the disastrous events in Anatolia. The existence of the CUP in Anatolia was increasingly a challenge for many people.⁹⁰

During the Great War, unrest, robbery, burglary and kidnappings were widespread in the South Marmara region.⁹¹ The lack of state authority led to an increase in the number of bandits committing crimes in the region. There were large numbers of Circassians among the bandits. Due to their dense population in the South Marmara region, they were characterised by a ‘war-like culture’, inherited from decades of war and exile before they settled in the region. This, along with clashes with other groups in the region, made them a highly influential force in South Marmara.⁹² Before WWI, conflict was already brewing between the Circassians and Albanians. Throughout WWI, the tension was exacerbated among Circassians, the Albanians, and the Turks of South Marmara. The reasons for these tensions were mainly competition for advantage over other groups, or for positions as

⁸⁹ Although WWI caused widespread devastation for the Ottoman Empire, it is not possible to see scholarly works on social life during this period. There are a few studies on this topic, see Yiğit Akın, “The Ottoman Home Front during World War I: Everyday Politics, Society, and Culture” (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Ohio State University, 2011). I would like to thank to Yiğit Akın for sharing his PhD thesis with me.

⁹⁰ Some CUP members still held important positions in some districts as notables and as officials in the military and bureaucracy. The nationalists, the majority of whom were CUP members, avoided outwardly showing their ties to the CUP. At the Erzurum and Sivas congresses (July – September 1919), propaganda for the CUP was banned. The reason for this was to garner enough support from the people for resistance against the Greeks. See, Sina Akşin, *İstanbul Hükümetleri ve Milli Mücadele; Mutlakiyete Dönüş (1918-1919)* (İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1992), 482.

⁹¹ Özcan Mert, “Anzavur’un İlk Ayaklanmasına Ait Belgeler”, *Belleten*, 56, no 217 (1992), 850-851.

⁹² Mert, “Anzavur’un İlk Ayaklanmasına”, 850-852. Also see Hacim Muhittin Çarıklı, *Balıkköşir ve Alaşehir Kongreleri ve Hacim Muhittin Çarıklı’nın Kuva-yi Milliye Hatıraları (1919-1920)* (Ankara: Türk İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü Yayınları, 1967), 77.

local administrators, which provided a great opportunity to gain access to state facilities to overcome the harsh conditions of war.

In the days following the Great War, the *Kuva-yi Milliye* and its loyalist opponents emerged as newly armed groups, adding to the number of armed groups already operating in South Marmara. The bandits and armed groups in the region were incorporated into these two new groups from their initially small and fragmented units. Although ethnic differences were important to the formation of these two different groups, their main distinctive features could be categorised as either nationalist or loyalist. This chapter provides background to the Turkish War of Independence, and then explores the nationalists' efforts to create a line of resistance against Greek occupation in the South Marmara region using paramilitary groups. Finally, it will examine the origins of the anti-nationalist movement and the mobilisation of Circassians and other Muslim peoples in the region.

1) Turkish War of Independence: Historiography and Problems with Sources

The Turkish War of Independence remains a controversial period in Turkish historiography. Undoubtedly, the history of the period is mainly a product of *Nutuk* – the ‘Great Speech’ of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Erik J. Zürcher claims that fifty thousand copies of *Nutuk* were published in the days following the CHP Congress in 1927 at which Atatürk gave the speech.⁹³ These fifty thousand copies were intended for the 1.4 million literate people of Turkey. From the mid-1930s until the 1950s, the Turkish War of Independence period was taught in public schools and universities as *İnkılap Tarihi* or ‘History of the Revolution’. The course was taught by politicians,⁹⁴ some of whom were

⁹³ Erik J. Zürcher, *The Young Turk legacy and the national awakening: from the Ottoman Empire to Atatürk's Turkey* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010).

⁹⁴ The course was started in 1935, and was taught by Yusuf Kemal Tengirşenk, Mahmut Esat Bozkurt, Recep Peker and Hikmet Bayur in İstanbul and Ankara Universities. Recep Peker, at the same time, was the general secretary of the CHP. See Hıfzı Veldet Velidedeoğlu, *Bir Lise Öğrencisinin Milli Mücadele Anıları* (İstanbul: Varlık Yayınevi, 1971), 67.

hard-line Kemalists, such as Recep Peker and Mahmut Esad Bozkurt, and it was used as a tool to disseminate official state ideology. The main sources of the lecture were Atatürk's *Nutuk*, which was also a useful source for creating a 'national history' of the 'nation'. Indeed, the textbooks were prepared by people close to government circles.⁹⁵ Textbooks were influenced by romanticism, French positivism and German historicism, which gave the Kemalist political leaders what they needed to create a national history for the newborn nation, full of heroism and pragmatism as a basis for a strong state.⁹⁶

It can also be said that publications emanating from the Turkish General Staff also had a huge impact on the creation of a historiography for the Turkish War of Independence, because until the 1980s, publications by General Staff on the period were the main sources available, due to restrictions placed on accessing archives in the country. They published a significant number of books and journals, which included important documents about the war.⁹⁷ However, it is not possible to know which documents were chosen for publication by General Staff. The archives were disregarded and not effectively organised in Turkey until the 1990s. Still, in the absence of archival documents, other publications, such as memoirs, began to expand in the early 1950s to become a significant source for the Turkish–Greek War historiography. Nevertheless, from the 1950s onwards, the main source for the period was Atatürk's *Nutuk*, due to restrictions on publications and in the press. There are several problems with relying on the *Nutuk*, mainly because it gives one-sided explanation of the incidents without much

⁹⁵ Outlines of the Turkish History '*Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, (Kollektif eser *Türk Tarihi Tetkik Heyeti*). *Mf. Vekâleti yayınları. Devlet matbaası. İstanbul 1930*, the book was prepared by a group which, barring two of them, were MPs from the Republican Party. Büşra Ersanlı, *İktidar ve Tarih* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2003). 119-120.

⁹⁶ Ersanlı, *İktidar ve Tarih*, 26.

⁹⁷ Genel Kurmay Harp Tarihi Dairesi, *Türk istiklal harbi: iç ayaklanmalar: 1919-1921* (Ankara: Genelkurmay Harp Tarihi Başkanlığı, 1964). Genel Kurmay Harp Tarihi Dairesi, *Genel Kurmay Harp Tarihi Vesikaları Dergisi* (Ankara: Genelkurmay Harp Tarihi Başkanlığı, 1964-1977). Genel Kurmay Harp Tarihi Dairesi, *Türk İstiklal Harbi: İstiklal harbinde ayaklanmalar (1919-1921)* (Ankara: Genelkurmay Harp Tarihi Başkanlığı, 1974).

objectivity. Numerous historians use *Nutuk* as a principal source, without ever questioning its veracity as a ‘historical memoir’ or document.

The lack of social history and informative works related to WWI and the Turkish War of Independence period are other reasons explaining the existence of ‘official’ Turkish historiography.⁹⁸ The historiography of the era was shaped by the authorities (politicians of the Republican Party), who sought to give political legitimacy to their policies.⁹⁹ One of the main resources of the period, besides archival documents, includes memoirs written by high-ranking military figures who fought during the War of Independence, and state officials from the early republican period. Certainly, however, memoirs are not always reliable sources. In Turkish historiography it can be said that they are generally more problematic than usual, because of the emphasis given to the ‘the single man’ Mustafa Kemal by early republican elites and successor generations. For instances, Hıfzı Veldet¹⁰⁰ mentions in his memoirs that when the British forces occupied the Assembly in Istanbul in March 1920, they (Hıfzı Veldet and his schoolmates) were both worried, and surprised.

⁹⁸ Even though in the last decade an increasing number of discussions and criticisms on TV programmes has occurred, as well as writings in popular history books about the Turkish War of Independence and World War I, there is not much academic study on the topics at hand, except for a few notable exceptions. See: Erik J. Zürcher, *The Unionist Factor; The Role of the Committee of Union and Progress in the Turkish National Movement 1905-1926* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1984). Ryan Gingeras, *Sorrowful Shores : Violence, Ethnicity, and the End of the Ottoman Empire, 1912-1923 /*, Oxford Studies in Modern European History. (Oxford ; New York : Oxford University Press, 2009). Gingeras, “Notorious Subjects, Invisible Citizens: North Caucasian Resistance to the Turkish National Movement in North western Anatolia, 1919-23. Eugene Rogan, *The Fall of the Ottomans : The Great War in the Middle East /* (New York : Basic Books, 2015). Michael A. Reynolds, *Shattering Empires : The Clash and Collapse of the Ottoman and Russian Empires, 1908-1918 /* (Cambridge, UK ; New York : Cambridge University Press, 2011). Mustafa Aksakal, *The Ottoman Road to War in 1914 : The Ottoman Empire and the First World War /*, Cambridge Military Histories (New York : Cambridge University Press, 2008).

⁹⁹ Ersanlı, *İktidar ve Tarih*, 67.

¹⁰⁰ Ord. Prof. Hıfzı Veldet (1904-1992) was an officer in Ankara in the Assembly from 1920 to 1928 until he was sent to Switzerland with a scholarship from the state to study education in law. He edited and published a modern Turkish version of the Atatürk’s *Nutuk*. However, this edition is problematic in terms of accuracy. Hakan Erdem reviewed this edition in his book, *Tarih-Lenk*. Erdem shows that Hıfzı Veldet cut one fifth of the *Nutuk* in his edition because of what he saw as its ‘unimportance’ in terms of ‘Kemalist Thought’. Erdem says that the Hıfzı Veldet’s edition includes significant numbers of anachronism and changes from the original *Nutuk*. See Gazi M. Kemal Atatürk, *Söylev*, ed. Hıfzı Veldet Velidedeoğlu (İstanbul: Çağdaş Yayınları, 1982). See also Hakan Erdem, *Tarih-Lenk; Kusursuz Yazarlar, Kağıttan Metinler* (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2010), 50-59.

*On one day March 1920, a friend of ours, Memduh (Payzın), came to us crying and said '[the] English [have] occupied Istanbul [and] martyred our soldiers when they were sleeping...' Everyone was thinking about Istanbul and their family and relatives, and consoling each other. We swore to take revenge from the English and fight the Greeks while we were crying. After that surprise when we were conscious, we thought 'Mustafa Kemal Paşa surely could take requisite measures, we believed him to be like a prophet.'*¹⁰¹

Hıfzı Veldet's attitude towards Mustafa Kemal reflects the typically unrealistic and fictional approach of the early republican elites to the period in general, and Mustafa Kemal in particular. In March 1920, Mustafa Kemal was a former Ottoman army general and the only head of the national representative committee, the *Heyet-i Temsiliye*.¹⁰² However, the approach taken by Hıfzı Veldet places Mustafa Kemal centre stage, as the sole figure already responsible for predetermining his policy responses to future incidents.

Here I argue that the nationalist resistance to Greek forces was not organised by the people themselves in Anatolia. The resistance was not a result of the process of a series of congresses carried out by local people to protest against, and then mobilise in opposition to the Greek occupation in western Anatolia or in eastern Anatolia. In fact, the potential for armed resistance was already apparent to the CUP, as they calculated the potential risks from an Allied occupation of Anatolia during the WWI. The Karakol Society, established by the CUP on 13 November 1918, was one of example of this. The aim of the society was to keep the empire united under the CUP's control. Every single person involved in establishing the society was a member of the CUP.¹⁰³ The resistance movements in Anatolia were a top-down project carried out through the medium of

¹⁰¹ 1920 yılı Mart ayı içinde bir gün arkadaşlarımızdan Memduh (Payzın) koşa koşa ve ağlıyarak geldi, 'İstanbul'u İngilizler işgal etmişler, askerlerimizi uykuda bastırarak şehit etmişler' dedi... Herkes İstanbul'u ve İstanbul'daki yakınlarını düşünüyor, herkes bir şey söylüyor, birbirini teselliye çalışıyordu. İngilizlerden intikam almak, Yunanlılarla savaşmak için nemli gözlerle and içmiştik. İlk telaş ve şaşkınlık geçtikten sonra: 'Mustafa Kemal Paşa her halde bir tedbir almıştır' sonucuna vardık ve durulduk. Ona bir peygambere inanır gibi inanıyorduk.' Hıfzı Veldet, *Bir Lise Öğrencisinin*, 37.

¹⁰² When Mustafa Kemal resigned from his duty, he was scared of being arrested as a rebel general by Kazım Karabekir, see Taha Akyol, *Ama Hangi Atatürk* (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2008), 49-53.

¹⁰³ Adnan Sofuoğlu, *Milli Mücadele Döneminde Kocaeli* (Ankara: AKDİTK Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 2006), 32-34.

resistance associations, called ‘Defence of Right Societies’ (*Müdafa-i Hukuk Cemiyetleri*). The associations in western and eastern Anatolia were set up by members of special organisations, Karakol, members of CUP, and local notables.¹⁰⁴

Although the Kemalists were once members of the CUP, Kemalist historians have consciously denied the role of the CUP in the nationalist resistance.¹⁰⁵ The CUP was the most powerful political party at the time, despite the majority holding it responsible for the current situation. It could still mobilise a broad range of people from different backgrounds within society; from members of armed militias or groups, to bureaucrats and high-ranking military personnel. The role of the CUP has been ignored in mainstream historiography, because its last days were filled with wars, conflicts, and exiles, and its members were engaged in a power struggle with their old allies: the Kemalists.¹⁰⁶ Such a background was not a convenient backdrop for the ‘new’ republic of Turkey. Moreover, the Kemalists were already in conflict with the remaining CUP members from the 1920s, up until the alleged assassination attempt of Mustafa Kemal in 1926.¹⁰⁷ Therefore, mainstream historians did not pay sufficient attention to the role played by the CUP during the pre-republic period.

2) Organising Paramilitary Resistance against the Greek Occupation

Before Greek forces occupied Izmir, paramilitary groups and arms had already been prepared by a group of Ottoman officials, to provide resistance against potential occupation of the region by Alliance members.¹⁰⁸ During WWI, the CUP hid a number of arms in West Anatolia. In contrast to the official historiography, a national struggle of

¹⁰⁴ Emel Akal, *Mustafa Kemal, İttihat Terakki ve Bolşevizm: Milli Mücadelenin Başlangıcında* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2012), 14.

¹⁰⁵ A critic for this approach, Erik J. Zürcher demonstrates in his book that National Struggle was a CUP project, Erik Jan Zürcher, *The Unionist Factor : The Role of the Committee of Union and Progress in the Turkish National Movement, 1905-1926* / (Leiden : Brill, 1984).

¹⁰⁶ That is, Mustafa Kemal and those around him.

¹⁰⁷ Akal, *Mustafa Kemal, İttihat Terakki ve Bolşevizm Milli Mücadelenin Başlangıcında*. 33.

¹⁰⁸ Zürcher, *The Unionist Factor*, 86.

resistance began before Mustafa Kemal went to Samsun on 19 May 1919. Some commanding officers and state officials, who were former members of CUP, or who had been close to the CUP, were already seeking how to go to Anatolia, due to the prevailing threat of the possible establishment of an Armenian state in Eastern Anatolia or the occupation of Anatolia by Alliance members. Kazım Karabekir, Mersinli Cemal Paşa, Nurettin Paşa, Cafer Tayyar (Eğilmez), Kazım Özalp, and Rauf Orbay were some of the most prominent figures. Rauf Orbay also helped to coordinate resistance between different groups in Anatolia against the Greek occupation.¹⁰⁹ Another important individual in this group was Kazım Karabekir, who had arrived in Anatolia before Mustafa Kemal. On March 13 1919, Kazım Karabekir was appointed commanding officer of the Fifteenth Army; later renamed the Ninth Army, in Erzurum.¹¹⁰

It can be said that the War Office and the General Staff of the Ottoman Empire supported the resistance movement from the outset. During this period, key efforts were led by Cevat Paşa (Çobanlı) (December 19, 1918-April 2, 1919), *Mersinli Cemal Paşa* (October 10, 1919-January 25, 1920), and *Kavaklı Ahmet Fevzi Paşa* (Çakmak) (February 3, 1919-March 16, 1920). Indeed, the Anatolian movement gained large-scale support from the War Office and General Staff.¹¹¹ Bekir Sami Bey¹¹² was appointed to bring together Ottoman soldiers who had dispersed when the Greeks occupied İzmir, and to take specific measures to organise combat units.¹¹³ Kazım (Özalp) Bey¹¹⁴ was also

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. 101, Rauf Orbay (1881-1964) was of Circassian descent. He was a former minister of Navy, and a leading figure in the Circassian cell in Istanbul. The cell organised the participation of Circassians in the national struggle. See Muhittin Ünal, *Miralay Bekir Sami Günsav'ın Kurtuluş Savaşı Anıları* (İstanbul: Cem Yayınları, 1993), 41. Emrah Cilasun, *Baki İlk Selam: Çerkes Ethem* (İstanbul: Belge Yayınları, 2004), 36-37.

¹¹⁰ Zürcher, *The Unionist Factor*, 101.

¹¹¹ Ibid. 101.

¹¹² He was born in Bandırma/Balıkesir (1879-1934), of Circassian descent. During the Turkish – Greek War, from 1918 to 1920 he was stationed in Bandırma as a colonel. Muhittin Ünal, *Miralay Bekir Sami Günsav'ın Kurtuluş Savaşı Anıları* (İstanbul: Cem Yayınları, 1993). Muhittin Ünal, 56. *Fırka Harb Ceridelerinden Miralay Bekir Sami Günsav'ın Kurtuluş Savaşı Anıları 1919-1920* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2016), forthcoming.

¹¹³ Kazım Özalp, *Milli Mücadele 1919-1922* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1971), 13.

¹¹⁴ Kazım Özalp (1882-1968), an Albanian descent. He was the commander of several corps during the Turkish-Greek War, and he was promoted as general after Sakarya battle in 1921.

nominated by the General Staff as the commander of the 61st division. He was also encouraged by the War Office to provide resistance against Greek troops, while avoiding massacres directed against the non-Muslims in the region.¹¹⁵ In South Marmara, Rauf Bey (Orbay) also met Çerkes Ethem¹¹⁶, with the aim of creating a line of resistance composed of paramilitary groups made up of Circassians, who were already armed as they had been fighting with the Albanians in the region.

It can be said that there was no coordination between the different local resistance groups to counter the occupation of Anatolia. It is also important to emphasise that the main aim of local resistance movements was to battle against Greek and Armenians soldiers and bandits.¹¹⁷ Although French and Italian soldiers occupied a number of areas, no major battles occurred between these forces and Ottoman soldiers.¹¹⁸ It must also be mentioned that the national movement did not always view France and Italy as enemies. Kazım Özalp states in his memoirs that, ‘the French and Italian military officials M. Deuran and Mr. Parciel behaved in a friendly way and helped us’ (*Kuva-yi Milliye*). Other foreign military officials came to Balıkesir seeking information about the activities, numbers of soldiers and the establishment of a nationalist resistance: ‘I did not have any doubts about bringing them to the fronts and showing them our national forces’

¹¹⁵ Ibid.29.

¹¹⁶ He was a former agent in the Ottoman Special Organisation, one of the leading paramilitary leaders in South Marmara in the days following the Great War, of Circassian descent, born in Emreköy/Balıkköy (1886–1950).

¹¹⁷ Balıkesir Congress was one of the important local congress which was organised by local nationalists in 26-31 July 1919. One of the important decisions of the Congress was, ‘to fight against the Greeks until they leave Anatolia.’ It is noteworthy that in the letters which were written by participants of the Congress, to send to the Western Powers, they avoided mentioning different ethnic groups while emphasizing the ‘Turk and Islamic characteristics of Anatolia.’ The reasons for using this terminology might be to avoid creating a new problem for the Ottoman state because according to the 12th principle of Wilson, autonomous provinces which consisted of different ethnic groups were to be established under Turkish rule. See Özalp, *Milli Mücadele*, 46.

¹¹⁸ Özalp, *Milli Mücadele*, 68,93.

actions'.¹¹⁹ Even British forces preferred not to come into conflict with the *Kuva-yi Milliye*. They tried to achieve their political objectives in Anatolia without fighting.¹²⁰

Both the Ottoman government and the *de facto* government of Ankara or (the *Kuva-yi Milliye*) also avoided conflict with the British.¹²¹ In addition, a group of Ottoman politicians and governors believed the continuing existence of the Ottoman State was dependent on British support. These politicians and governors believed that if they created problems for the British forces in Anatolia, they would risk losing the entire state, because they were too weak to resist Britain.¹²² For example, Ali Kemal, the Minister of Interior, supported an agreement with the British, choosing not to fight against the Allies and the Greeks – even if they occupied the land brutally. Otherwise, he claimed that it would not be possible ‘to save the fatherland.’ He was antagonistic towards the *Kuva-yi Milliye*, and its policies. One of his telegrams to the local pro- *Kuva-yi Milliye* governors reveals his aim was to inhibit the progress of the nationalists; ‘Your way is a dead end, you will lead to massacres of the Muslim elements of the state. We cannot do anything while having war (against them)’.¹²³ In contrast, he also explained the committee of Balıkesir’s resistance movement; stating that they (the Ottoman government) had to order them not to resist, since they (the Ottoman government) were under pressure from their occupiers. However, he also advised the national resistance committee that they should rise against the Ottoman government, because resistance was their right.¹²⁴ The Ottoman

¹¹⁹ Ibid. 68 ‘Fransız subaylardan M. Deuran ve İtalyan tabasında Mr. Parciel, o sırada milli kuvvetlerin faaliyetleriyle çok alakadar oldular ve bizlere yakınlık göstererek yardım ettiler. Bundan başka bazı ecnebi subaylar ve memurlar Kuva-yi Milliye’nin kuruluş şekli, mevcudu ve faaliyeti hakkında bilgiler almak üzere Balıkesir’e geldiler. Bunlardan bazılarını cephenin belirli noktalarına göndermekte ve milli kuvvetlerimizin hareketini göstermekte bir zarar görmüyordum. Aksine fayda görüyordum.’

¹²⁰ Ibid. 93... Zaten İngilizler, İstiklal muharebesi süresince birçok vaziyetlerde bu gibi sebepler ortaya çıktığı halde, bizimle çarpışmadan daima kaçınıyorlardı. Özalp, *Milli Mücadele*, 93.

¹²¹ During that period, except for Ali Fuat Paşa’s conflict with British troops on 18 June 1920 in İzmit, there were no serious exchanges of fire between British and *Kuva-yi Milliye* troops. See TTK Bekir Sami dos.25, 1409-1410-1411.

¹²² See Ali Kemal’s telegram to the governor of the Karesi. Özalp, *Milli Mücadele*, 33.

¹²³ Özalp, *Milli Mücadele*, 33.

¹²⁴ Rahmi Apak, *İstiklal Savaşında Garp Cephesi Nasıl Kuruldu* (İstanbul: Güven Basımevi, 1942), 52. Ali Kemal: ‘Biz size, sizi ayaklandırmaktan menedecek emirler veririz, çünkü tazyik altındayız. Siz bize dahi isyan ediniz. Milli müdafaa, bir milletin en kudsî hakkıdır.’

State was already suffering from a lack of manpower and as a consequence of financial and military losses, incurred during WWI. It could not survive a British attack. The British officials similarly warned their officials about their military activities in South Marmara against the Greek troops, demanding that the Ottomans halt their attacks in the region, warning that otherwise, the Greek troops, backed by the British, might improve their situation with the result that they would be able to occupy as far as central Anatolia.¹²⁵

The British presence created a dilemma for the Istanbul government. Although the Ottoman rulers were striving to keep the empire united under its control without losses, to succeed in its aim, compromises had to be given to the British in terms of sovereignty. British presence for 30-35 years was considered a preferable option to dismemberment of the state.¹²⁶ With this policy, the palace would enhance its power, which was very low under the CUP's rule. The members of the Liberal Entente held a similar position relative to the palace. They sought ways to improve their relations with the British, working towards signing a peace agreement to avoid further trouble for the empire and its subjects.¹²⁷

In the days following the Greek occupation, local organisations were established under the title: 'the Resistance against the Occupation and Annexation of Greek Forces', in South Western Anatolia. The local resistance was organised by military men, local governors and nobles in South Marmara.¹²⁸ The first congress of local resistance groups was held between 27 June and 12 July 1919. The aim of these local congresses was to organise local lines of resistances against the occupiers and to protect people's

¹²⁵ Özalp, *Milli Mücadele*, 56-57. Assistance and cooperation from the War Office Istanbul to military units Anatolia were observed by British Officials. See Bilal Şimşir, *İngiliz Belgelerinde Atatürk* (Ankara:Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1973-1984). vol I, 322.

¹²⁶ Ahmet Demirel, *Birinci Meclis'te Muhalefet : İkinci Grup* (Cağaloğlu, İstanbul : İletişim, 2009), 53-54.

¹²⁷ Ibid. 53-54.

¹²⁸ Doğu Ergil, *Milli Mücadelenin Sosyal Tarihi* (Ankara: Turhan Kitabevi, 1981), 70.

possessions. There were no direct connections between local congresses in different regions, due to a lack of collective intent and leadership.

In the districts and towns, the notables were the most important assistants of military commanders. In the days following the Great War, local notables were hesitant about and resistant to becoming involved, as they were sickened by war like many others in the empire. Moreover, some of the local notables did not necessarily agree with the intention to conduct paramilitary attacks against Greek forces. This changed, however, when Greek forces occupied Western Anatolia, introducing no fewer than one hundred thousand Greeks to settle in the region. It was here that local notables began to fear for the loss of their possessions.¹²⁹ They began to support the local resistance movement and paramilitary groups in order to safeguard their possessions and privileged positions, which were threatened by the Greek occupation.¹³⁰ In addition to their economic power and the great amount of land they owned, the notables had large numbers of workers who were employed on their lands.¹³¹

The newspapers in Istanbul begin to criticise the high ranking military commanders for the decisions they had taken during WWI. The pressure felt from the press, coupled with the existence of Allied soldiers in the capital discouraged the military, and those related to the CUP and its war policies in Istanbul. Moreover, the Greek occupation of Western Anatolia and the presence of Allied forces in Istanbul forced high-ranking military men to leave the city for Anatolia. Although Mustafa Kemal tried to take his place in the Istanbul government as Minister of War, he was unsuccessful and ultimately left Istanbul, settling for the role of an inspector in Samsun. Notwithstanding the nationalist fervour that persuaded high-ranking bureaucrats and military men to resist the occupation by going to Anatolia, it was not until the official occupation of Istanbul by British forces that

¹²⁹ Ibid. 93.

¹³⁰ Ibid. 93.

¹³¹ Ibid. 275.

large numbers of these officials chose to leave Istanbul.¹³² After the occupation, they felt they had no place left for them in Istanbul; they had few options open to them; either they would be arrested by British forces and sent to Malta as political detainees, or they could leave Istanbul for Ankara.¹³³ It seems that the occupation of Istanbul hugely influenced their decision to go to Ankara.

3) The Rise of the Anti-nationalist Movement in South Marmara

The population of the South Marmara region consisted mostly of refugees who had travelled to the region in the mid-1860s. One of the largest groups in the region was the Circassians, many of whom had settled in the region by the Ottoman Porte in the second half of the 19th century after the Circassian exile. During the days following the ‘93 *Harbi*’, or the Ottoman–Russian War of 1877-1878, an increasing number of refugees flooded into the region. These included Turks, Albanians, Circassians, and Bosnians. From the 1850s to the 1920s, the influx of refugees completely altered the social and economic characteristics of the South Marmara. Meanwhile, the non-Muslim residents of South Marmara were either exiled or left the region voluntarily, between 1910 and the early 1920s. Their migration, or exile, also led to further major change in the region. The Turks, Circassians, Albanians and Bosnians had already previously fought one another, and from early 1910, the relationship between the different groups had been exacerbated due to weak state authority, and the arrival of many more migrants in the region fleeing from the effects of the Balkan Wars.

In the months following the end of WWI, Anzavur Ahmed, a member of the Ottoman Special Organisation, was appointed governor of several districts in the South

¹³² Fevzi Çakmak (1876 – 1950) and İsmet İnönü (1884-1973) were two prominent figures of the war. They went to Ankara in April 1920.

¹³³ British forces begin to arrest and exile to Malta those who were in important positions in the Empire during the Great War period. On 28 May 1919 sixty seven detainees were exiled. See Doğu Ergil, *Milli Mücadelenin*, 91.

Marmara region.¹³⁴ Although at the close of WWI, Anzavur was working with the nationalists to control the Circassian bandits who were creating chaos and endangering the region, later he moved to the anti-nationalist cause, because his demands were not being satisfied by the nationalists.¹³⁵ During the Greek occupation, Anzavur Ahmed had mobilised many people with the support of some high-ranking Ottoman politicians working against the *Kuva-yi Milliye*. He used discourse laden with Islamic references, emphasising the importance of the Caliphate and the Ottoman Sultanate, while simultaneously attacking the declarations of the *Kuva-yi Milliye* in Anatolia by accusing it of being a continuation of the CUP. Anzavur Ahmed clearly used key nationalist figures' links with the CUP in his speeches, in order to mobilise the masses against them. He referred to the wartime and pre-wartime policies of the CUP, drawing analogies with *Kuva-yi Milliye* in a bid to disgrace the latter in front of the people. He declared that his aim was to save the country from the CUP and its policies, and end the Greek occupation with a loyal army.¹³⁶ Conversely, Hacim Muhittin (1881 – 1965) a leading figure for *Kuva-yi Milliye* in Balıkesir, states that the aim of Ahmed Anzavur was actually to arrest him and other *Kuva-yi Milliye* members (during horse races in Balıkesir/Savaştepe) to send them to Istanbul. He also believed that Anzavur's movement would ultimately lead to a Turkish-Circassian conflict in the region, and that, British forces would then take advantage of the situation to gain control of the region.¹³⁷

Certainly, in 1919, a short while before Anzavur arrived; chaos persisted in the region, particularly in Karacabey, as struggles between the Circassians and Albanians

¹³⁴ According to Mert, he was governor of Hüdavendigar (Bursa), Kal'a-i Sultaniye (Çanakkale), Karesi (Balıkesir) from at the end of 1918 to 23rd of April 1919, and the governor of İzmit from 23rd of April 1919 to August 1919. See Mert, "Anzavur'un İlk Ayaklanmasına", 847-972.

¹³⁵ Kemal Özer, *Kurtuluş Savaşında Gönlen* (Balıkesir: Türkdili Matbaası, 1964), 53. Rahmi Apak claims that Anzavur was sent to Balıkesir by the İstanbul government to protect the region from bandits. Apak, *İstiklal Savaşında Garp Cephesi Nasıl Kuruldu*, 95.

¹³⁶ Özalp, *Milli Mücadele*, 66.

¹³⁷ Çarıklı, *Balıkesir ve Alaşehir*, 97-100.

worsened.¹³⁸ Armed clashes were taking between groups and many of these continued for days on end, with people engaged in the widespread plundering of one another's villages and farms.¹³⁹ A significant number of people were killed on both sides. The conflict between the Albanians and Circassians spread to other districts in the region, such as Kirmasti.¹⁴⁰ Overall insecurity provided a significant opportunity for Anzavur's opposition¹⁴¹ to mobilise the masses to counter the nationalists. In addition to the security problems affecting the region, members of the *Kuva-yi Milliye* forced people to pay taxes beyond what they could reasonably afford; they also confiscated their horses, and seized property belonging to villagers and residents in the region.¹⁴²

Clashes between the Circassians and Albanians were an acute problem in Kirmasti and Karacabey. However, Bekir Sami believes that the underlying dispute between the Circassians and Albanians in Kirmasti and Karacabey was not 'ethnic' in nature.¹⁴³ However, even if the reasons for the conflict between the Circassians and Albanians *were* due to ethnic differences, this could not provide a basis for generalisation to events in the entire South Marmara region. The basis of the conflict for the groups was about gaining local authority over the groups in the region, while trying to restrict other groups' living space. An understanding of the participants in the Anzavur incident consisted of several groups; this provides evidence of the veracity of Bekir Sami's argument. Many of those who took part in the Anzavur incident were Circassians, Pomaks, Albanians and Turks. They participated because Anzavur Ahmed's rhetoric focused on Islam and the Sultan/Caliph, although he used these as symbols rather than attaching any deeper

¹³⁸ Mert, "Anzavur'un İlk Ayaklanmasına", 852.

¹³⁹ Ibid. 852.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. 852.

¹⁴¹ In Turkey, the existing historiography defines the Anzavur's movement as a rebellion or uprising. However, Anzavur Ahmed did not rebel against the legitimate government of the time. He was an Ottoman official who was against the national movement in Anatolia which, it can be argued, was itself already rebelling against the Ottoman Porte.

¹⁴² Çarıklı, *Balıkköy ve Alaşehir*, 34. Mert, "Anzavur'un İlk Ayaklanmasına", 862. Zühtü Güven, *Anzavur isyanı; İstiklâl Savaşı tarihinden acı bir safha*, (İstanbul: Aydınlık Matbaası, 1948), 45 quoted Mert, "Anzavur'un İlk Ayaklanmasına", 862.

¹⁴³ TTK. Bekir Sami dosya 13, 275-276-277.

meaning to them as will become clearer later.¹⁴⁴ It is apparent, however, that although problems existed between the different ethnic groups, an emphasis on Islam, loyalty to the Sultan, and an anti-CUP stance convinced them to work together against the *Kuva-yi Milliye*.

Anzavur was also backed by several groups in the capital. He used the presence of the British in the region to push his anti-nationalist agenda. Britain also aimed to use Ahmed Anzavur to save the Dardanelles and the Straits for themselves. The threat from the nationalists around the Dardanelles forced the British to support Anzavur's movement in the form of military equipment.¹⁴⁵ The Ottoman government, the Damad Ferit cabinet itself, also promised military assistance to Anzavur Ahmed to oppose the *Kuva-yi Milliye*.¹⁴⁶ He was further supported by other groups, some of whom were agents or volunteers of the Special Organisation of the Ottoman State, who had been pardoned by the state for past crimes committed whilst in criminal gangs.¹⁴⁷ He also began to recruit armed persons to counter the *Kuva-yi Milliye*.¹⁴⁸ Anzavur Ahmed used Islamic rhetoric, while also claiming that the *Kuva-yi Milliye* was a continuation of the CUP; a group, which he claimed was comprised of freemasons.¹⁴⁹ He also presented himself to the Sultan as the one able to liberate Aydın province from Greek occupation and protect the country from further losses in provinces that might potentially become part of an independent Armenia.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁴ Ryan Gingeras, "Notorious Subjects, Invisible Citizens: North Caucasian Resistance to the Turkish National Movement in Northwestern Anatolia, 1919-23," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 40.1 (February 2008): 98.

¹⁴⁵ PRO/FO 371/5047 – E 3713/3/44. April 23 1920.

¹⁴⁶ PRO/FO 371/5047 – E 3713/3/44. April 23 1920. "Anzavur Ahmet Paşa", *İkdam*, 26 April 1920, "Dahili Sütun; Ahmed Anzavur Paşa", *İkdam*, 27 April 1920.

¹⁴⁷ Mert, "Anzavur'un İlk Ayaklanmasına", 862. Such as, gang leaders Şah İsmail and Canbazlı Hakkı.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. 865.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. 865.

¹⁵⁰ Çarıklı, *Balıkkesir ve Alaşehir*, 97-98.

As can be apparent in a report sent to the War Office, the reasons for the widespread unrest in the Bursa province of South Marmara and its surroundings during the post Great War period could be expressed as follows:

- The gendarmes are not forceful and reliable;
- The residents of the region are from very diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds, like ‘the tower of Babel’;
- Due to the continuation of many new waves of migration, many people are homeless and suffering from famine;
- Worse still is the ‘bandit activism’ of some groups, which opens a door to foreign intervention in the region; and
- Those who have been appointed as members of the military tribunal have not come to the region to begin their duties...¹⁵¹

On 12 November 1919, Anzavur Ahmed captured the Susurluk district of Balıkesir.¹⁵² One of his aims in doing so was to end the *Kuva-yi Milliye*, and to arrest its members.¹⁵³ He gave a speech, which emphasised his plans to abolish military service; so that he could protect the Caliphate; and he requested that soldiers either leave the district or join him.¹⁵⁴ The *Kuva-yi Milliye*’s response to Anzavur Ahmed’s movement was clear. At the beginning, the *Kuva-yi Milliye* avoided conflict with Anzavur Ahmed, because he had already received the backing of many people in a short period. Some military commanders were sent by the *Kuva-yi Milliye* to induce Anzavur Ahmed to join their national movement. However, they were unsuccessful.¹⁵⁵ It is important to explore what the *Kuva-yi Milliye* meant to Ahmed Anzavur as an ordinary Ottoman legionary

¹⁵¹ TTK. Bekir Sami dosya 13, 262-263-264.

¹⁵² TTK. Bekir Sami dosya 14, 401. Mert, “Anzavur’un İlk Ayaklanmasına”, 871.

¹⁵³ ATASE.ATAZB. 11-47, 29/30.10.1335(1919).

¹⁵⁴ Mert, “Anzavur’un İlk Ayaklanmasına”, 868.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid. 869.

(*alaylı*) soldier and a former member of the *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa*. In a telegram to the Ministry of Interior, Anzavur Ahmed stated that, because of the CUP's policies over the last ten years, people were witnessing an ongoing and terrible situation in the empire, while the *Kuva-yi Milliye*, which was organised by the very same people, was now provoking ordinary people to seek revenge against the Greeks and the Alliance. They were nothing more than bandits who had come together and organised the *Kuva-yi Milliye*. The group also ruled the state without consideration for the legitimate Ottoman government. They collected money from the poor, while living lavishly themselves.¹⁵⁶

On 14 November 1919, he sent a letter to Colonel Kazım Özalp to demand Özalp's neutrality in his fight against the CUP and the Greek troops.¹⁵⁷ A day later, Anzavur Ahmed and his troops encountered the *Kuva-yi Milliye*. He was then defeated, and left the region.¹⁵⁸ On 22 November, Anzavur Ahmed captured Gönen and arrested a number of officials, including the first lieutenant and governor of the district Ziya (Şahan) Efendi, as well as *Kuva-yi Milliye* member, Esat Bey.¹⁵⁹ The mostly Circassian populated villages around Gönen and Manyas areas either willingly or forcibly participated in Anzavur's movement; these villages included: Muratlar, Keçeler, Bayramiç, Üçpınar, Karalar, Çerkes Keçidere, Karaağaçalan, Aynalıdere, Hacı Menteş, Sızı Hasan Bey, Çerkes Çalı Oba, and Asmalıdere (Turks were resident in the village).¹⁶⁰ Çerkes Ethem participated in the battle against Anzavur Ahmed.¹⁶¹ On 26 November they came to Gönen, and Anzavur Ahmed was again defeated.¹⁶² Gönen and its villages were held by *Kuva-yi Milliye* on 2 December; up until this time, Anzavur Ahmed had lost 120 of his men in conflict.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁶ TTK. Bekir Sami dosya 15, 439-440-441.

¹⁵⁷ Özalp, *Milli Mücadele*, 166.

¹⁵⁸ Mert, "Anzavur'un İlk Ayaklanmasına", 875.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, 877.

¹⁶⁰ Özer, *Kurtuluş Savaşında Gönen*, 72.

¹⁶¹ TTK. Bekir Sami dosya 15, 477.

¹⁶² Mert, "Anzavur'un İlk Ayaklanmasına", 878.

¹⁶³ Ibid, 880.

On 6 December 1919, nearly 80 armed people under the leadership of the gangs Suphi and Kara Hasan of *Kuva-yi Milliye* were sent to arrest Anzavur Ahmed; they ended up looting the farm of the wife of a prominent Circassian gang leader named Şah İsmail, and some other Circassian villages.¹⁶⁴ Another group of armed people also joined the Suphi and Kara Hasan action against the Circassians. The situation in the region transformed into an ethnic conflict between the Circassians and Turks. The local governors tried to minimise these conflicts and sent an advisory council to the Circassians, in which two Circassians took part (Big) Ahmet Fevzi Paşa and Hurşit Paşa.¹⁶⁵ The advisory council spoke to local people in order to calm the situation, and this prompted the discharge of the rebels arrested in the region by the local governors.¹⁶⁶ On balance, it can be stated that during the Anzavur incident, the approach of the Istanbul government was self-contradicting. Initially, there was no determined policy towards the *Kuva-yi Milliye*. There was no doubt that different political groups existed in Istanbul, all vying for power.¹⁶⁷ Even in the government, different policies were applied by different ministries. Two ministries in particular – *Dahiliye Nezareti* (Ministry of Interior) and *Harbiye Nezareti* (War Office, and their local branches) espoused very different policies. The military commander of local units, such as the War Office, demanded a harsh repression of ‘the rebels’ without any sympathy.¹⁶⁸ Meanwhile, the local governors of the region, i.e. those from the Ministry of Interior, aspired to send an advisory council to Anzavur Ahmed in order to placate him.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁴ Özalp, *Milli Mücadele*, 70-71.

¹⁶⁵ Mert, “Anzavur’un İlk Ayaklanmasına”, 881. Hurşit Paşa in particular eulogized the *Kuva-yi Milliye* and added that he would try to provide arms for *Kuva-yi Milliye* in Istanbul. Özalp, *Milli Mücadele*, 79.

¹⁶⁶ Özalp says they had already decided that ‘the council could do nothing, the only solution was to finish the chaos with the sword.’ Özalp, *Milli Mücadele*, 70-71. Mert, “Anzavur’un İlk Ayaklanmasına”, 885.

¹⁶⁷ For example, although Anzavur Ahmed was supported by the Sadrazam Damat Ferid Paşa, his government decided to warn Anzavur Ahmed because of the chaos created by him. See “*Biga’ya Heyet*”, *İkdam*, 31 March 1920.

¹⁶⁸ Özalp, *Milli Mücadele*, 88.

¹⁶⁹ Mert, “Anzavur’un İlk Ayaklanmasına”, 886.

It can be said that from the very beginning a connection existed between the War Office in Istanbul and *Kuva-yi Milliye*. When Britain was asked by the Ministry of War to remove Cemal Paşa and Cevat Paşa from their offices, Mustafa Kemal, even though he had been removed from his duties, supported resistance against the British demands. The War Office was ostensibly part of the national movement. The nationalists and the War Office itself engaged in a partial collaboration, and despite the frequent cabinet reshuffles in Istanbul, this collaboration continued until the official occupation of Istanbul by British forces in March 1920. It is also noteworthy that the nationalists viewed themselves as the ‘saviours’ of the state. Indeed, it can be seen from archival documents that the nationalists were already considering themselves the legitimate governors of the state, long before they opened the assembly in Ankara on April 1920. In fact, their attitude led to confusion in the existing historiography, due to the often contradictory language used; language that presented them as both reliant on the Istanbul government *and* against it. Although they were officials and the military men of the Ottoman State, they accused the Istanbul of for not taking the necessary measures to stop the chaos in South Marmara. The people who vied against the nationalists were characterised as ‘opponents’ *muhaliif / karşıt* by the former; however, it can be argued that those opponents were not against the legitimate government of the country, i.e. the one in Istanbul. They were, in fact, against the *Kuva-yi Milliye*, and later the Ankara government.

Particularly with regard to Biga, it can be said that the town’s local officials did not support one side in the conflict between the *Kuva-yi Milliye* and Ahmed Anzavur. Although the *Kuva-yi Milliye* consisted of military men, bureaucrats and state officials, besides the guerrillas and irregulars, the local governors of Biga still did not support it.¹⁷⁰ It seems that in the town there were two distinct groups tussling for authority, while the

¹⁷⁰ Uluğ İğdemir, *Biga Ayaklanması ve Anzavur Olayları; Günlük Anılar* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1973).

local officials of the town were changing sides according to who was winning. On 20 February 1920, Anzavur Ahmed captured Biga and seized arms, which had been snatched earlier by the *Kuva-yi Milliye* from the Akbaş arsenal.¹⁷¹ Many Circassians arrived in Biga with Anzavur from their villages.¹⁷² Significant numbers of people from the districts of Gönen and Biga joined Anzavur's movement towards Yenice, where arms were being stored by the *Kuva-yi Milliye*.¹⁷³ Hamdi Bey,¹⁷⁴ who was a nationalist and a former governor of Edremit district, aimed to prepare a regiment from Biga, and to tax the people of Biga for the expenses of the regiment.¹⁷⁵ However, the potential taxation troubled people who had already undergone economic hardships; thus, it caused an increase in support for Anzavur Ahmed.¹⁷⁶ Due to this support, the *Kuva-yi Milliye* failed to resist the anti-nationalists in the region. The arsenal was blown up by the *Kuva-yi Milliye*, because they did not have enough soldiers to protect the arms and felt threatened by the possibility of Anzavur gaining access to them.¹⁷⁷ By April, Anzavur took control in Gönen,¹⁷⁸ Bandırma¹⁷⁹ Karacabey, and Kirmasti. The impact of his movement reached Adapazarı, where the people, a majority of whom were Circassian, then began to conspire against *Kuva-yi Milliye*.¹⁸⁰ His movement thus became widespread throughout the region.

¹⁷¹ Özalp, *Milli Mücadele*, 98-99. Uluğ İğdemir mentions that Circassians from the village of Savaştepe raided Biga on 16 February. There were also Pomaks and *Muhacirs* (Muslims from the Balkans) and many armed villagers in Biga. İğdemir, *Biga Ayaklanması*, 5.

¹⁷² İğdemir, *Biga Ayaklanması*, 9.

¹⁷³ Özalp, *Milli Mücadele*, 98-99.

¹⁷⁴ He was killed by Anzavur's forces at the end of February 1920; see TİTE K20G34B34001 29, 3, 1336(1920). Özcan Mert and Uluğ İğdemir also mention the Akbaş arsenal incident in their works, and that Hamdi Bey was killed by the 'rebels' (anti-nationalists). Hamdi tried to protect the arms against the 'bandits.' However, Bekir Sami's telegrams tell us a different story. Yusuf İzzet Paşa sent a telegram to Bekir Sami saying that 'although we established a union in Biga where we had between three hundred or four hundred soldiers, due to Hamdi Bey's arrest of bandit leader Kara Hasan, a reaction occurred among the people to save Kara Hasan from Hamdi Bey. Anzavur Ahmed also benefited from this incident.' TTK. Bekir Sami dosya.18, 743-44-45-46.

¹⁷⁵ İğdemir, *Biga Ayaklanması*, 87, notes 27.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid. 87, notes 27.

¹⁷⁷ Özalp, *Milli Mücadele*, 98-99.

¹⁷⁸ Gönen was one of the unique places during this period. The commander of the 174 unit, Rahmi bey, wrote that 'there was no one who did not fire against the soldiers (*Kuva-yi Milliye*,) in Gönen.' TTK. Bekir Sami dosya.20, 939. He also says that the soldiers rejected the orders to fire against the people, and that fifty-four of them deserted. See TTK. Bekir Sami dosya.21, 1025-1026.

¹⁷⁹ By having Bandırma, he had an opportunity to have direct communication with the Istanbul government via telegram lines. See Özalp, *Milli Mücadele*, 109-110.

¹⁸⁰ PRO/FO 371/5167 – 776 – 791 – 793 – 794.

The actions taken by the *Kuva-yi Milliye* against Anzavur Ahmed were on occasion quite harsh. On 6 March 1920, a group of people from *Kuva-yi Milliye* burned down three Circassian villages and the houses of Circassians who had been allied with Anzavur Ahmed.¹⁸¹ Indeed, until April 1920, the *Kuva-yi Milliye* did not have much support in the region and the anti-nationalist movement was still strong. Therefore, to solidify their position in the region, the *Kuva-yi Milliye* commanders took additional steps, hardening their policy and rhetoric against the Circassians in order to ‘warn’ them of the consequences if they persisted. Bekir Sami emphasised that the Circassians should be loyal to the state; meaning the *Kuva-yi Milliye*, otherwise they would be annihilated. He emphasised this by going to Kirmastı and Karacabey and arguing that for any ‘betrayal’, the Circassians would be annihilated.¹⁸² When a concern was raised among Circassians about the *Kuva-yi Milliye*, Bekir Sami tried to convince them they were safe, by saying that half of the leadership in the *Kuva-yi Milliye* were Circassians. The aim of *Kuva-yi Milliye* was nothing more than to achieve an independent Turkey.¹⁸³ However, Bekir Sami did not consider the ordinary people’s thoughts regarding the *Kuva-yi Milliye*. Ordinary Circassians felt themselves close to the Sultanate and Caliphate, contrary to the Circassian elite who were once members of the CUP and who had then taken a role in the *Kuva-yi Milliye*. Bekir Sami nonetheless emphasised the role of the elite Circassians in the *Kuva-yi Milliye*.

Some military units were permitted to imprison, punish and even execute (without the necessary judicial process) those who opposed the *Kuva-yi Milliye* and supported

¹⁸¹ İğdemir, *Biga Ayaklanması*, 35. It seems that there are overstatements in some of Uluğ İğdemir’s expressions about the activities of the Circassians in Biga. It can be also seen in the book that İğdemir is extremely supportive of the *Kuva-yi Milliye* and against Ahmed Anzavur without making the distinctions between his armed people and ordinary Circassians. ‘The Circassian looting cannot be described. Their actions would fill volumes of books. They were stealing their friends’ animals while they had gone to the war. Their leader is already a man who steals horses. What can you expect from this kind of group?’ İğdemir, *Biga Ayaklanması*, 62.

¹⁸² TTK. Bekir Sami dosya 14, 326-327-328-329.

¹⁸³ TTK. Bekir Sami dosya 15, 463-464.

Anzavur Ahmed.¹⁸⁴ The nationalists did in fact discuss the process of military tribunals. However, it emerged that military men did not aspire to conduct proper judicial processes; they saw this as wasting time.¹⁸⁵ The commander of the 172nd Regiment, lieutenant colonel Kasap Osman (or Osman “the Butcher”), asked Bekir Sami for his opinion concerning whether he should execute prisoners by shooting, or judge them.¹⁸⁶ Two days after asking for Bekir Sami’s opinion, Colonel Osman executed four individuals who had killed a *Kuva-yi Milliye* soldier in an exchange of fire, as an example to others.¹⁸⁷

The lack of proper equipment and organised army units in the region led to an understanding among the *Kuva-yi Milliye* commanders regarding the importance of the irregular and paramilitary groups in carrying out resistance against Greek troops and the Anzavur Ahmed incident. Assistance against Anzavur Ahmed from Çerkes Ethem, who had already established a hundred-kilometre-long line of resistance against the Greek forces,¹⁸⁸ as well as Demirci Efe, was demanded.¹⁸⁹ Çerkes Ethem came to the region with two thousand armed men, while Demirci Efe sent six hundred cavalrymen to join the *Kuva-yi Milliye*.¹⁹⁰ A group of Anzavur’s armed men, under the command of Çerkes Ahmet Bey, a retired Ottoman army colonel, were followed to Biga wharf, where they were caught in the crossfire of the *Kuva-yi Milliye* before boarding a ship to escape from Biga.¹⁹¹ Anzavur was wounded and left the region for Istanbul. Those who supported

¹⁸⁴ TTK. Bekir Sami dosya.22, 1142.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid. 1161.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid. 1161.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid. 1161.

¹⁸⁸ Emrah Cilasun, *Baki İlk Selam*, 44.

¹⁸⁹ Kazım Özalp also suggested using Albanian bandits against Anzavur Ahmed. The bandits were in the region from long before. Kazım Özalp and Mustafa Kemal aimed to secure the bandits’ support by promising them arms and money so as to convince them to become part of *Kuva-yi Milliye* against Anzavur Ahmed. See TTK. Bekir Sami dosya.22, 1175-1176.

¹⁹⁰ Özalp, *Milli Mücadele*, 113.

¹⁹¹ Ibid, 115. Çerkes Ethem also argued, similar to Kazım Özalp, that ‘Our first forward patrol entered the district and fired towards the serpebt people until the ship left from the harbour.’ ‘İlk ve ani kasabaya giren keşif kollarımız vapura iltica etmek üzere gördüğü eşhası mel’uneye ateş etmişler ve vapur hareket edinceye kadar ateşlerine devam ederek vapurun hareketini tesri etmişlerdir.’ TTK. Bekir Sami dosya.22, 1138.

Anzavur were later dispersed by Ethem's forces. Ahmed Anzavur did not represent an important threat to Ankara at this time.

It is noteworthy that Kazım Özalp referred to Ahmed Anzavur's armed men as "brigands", even though they were under the command of a former Ottoman colonel who himself had been under the command of Kazım Özalp during WWI.¹⁹² However, Kazım Özalp did not offer to explain why a retired Ottoman Army colonel, Çerkes Ahmet Bey, had also joined Ahmed Anzavur. The answer to this might lie in Çerkes Ahmet's own Circassian network, a dislike of CUP/ *Kuva-yi Milliye*, his feelings or ties to the Ottoman dynasty, or local disputes with other groups. Kazım Özalp did not give any reasons for the actions carried out by his former colonel. He only emphasised that they (himself and *Kuva-yi Milliye*) were working to 'save' the fatherland, while the anti-nationalist movement was comprised of bandits, religious fanatics, and bigots.¹⁹³

Ahmed Anzavur's movement favoured a two-pronged tactic as part of a wider strategy of mobilising the different people of the region. The first was centred on ethnicity and the second on Islam. That is to say, although Anzavur Ahmed underlined "Islamic unity" and his rhetoric focused on the Muslims of the state; his main success came in mobilising large numbers of Circassians.¹⁹⁴ Indeed, he focused on places populated by Circassians, such as Biga, Gönen, Kirmastı, Manyas, Düzce, Adapazarı and Hendek. It is also important to mention that not only ordinary Circassians, but also Circassian notables supported Ahmed Anzavur.¹⁹⁵ These features of Anzavur's movement threatened the *Kuva-yi Milliye*, because of the possibility they opened for a "Turkish-Circassian issue" to develop in the region.¹⁹⁶ The *Kuva-yi Milliye* also needed the support of the armed

¹⁹² Özalp, *Milli Mücadele*, 115.

¹⁹³ Ibid. 125.

¹⁹⁴ İğdemir, *Biga Ayaklanması*, 9.

¹⁹⁵ TTK. Bekir Sami dosya.21, 1054.

¹⁹⁶ A group of Circassians, Ahmed Anzavur, Kel Huseyin and Mirza Beys sent Hasan Tahsin on 13 May 1920 to ask Bekir Sami about the rumours regarding a plan for the annihilation of the Circassians by Turks in the region. Çarıklı, *Balıkkesir ve Alaşehir*, 102.

groups in the region for their war against the Greeks, and could not afford the “ethnic conflict” brewing among the subjects of the state.¹⁹⁷

As noted above, the second important component of Ahmed Anzavur’s mobilisation strategy was his appeal for Islamic unity and better relations with the Ottoman Porte.¹⁹⁸ Such rhetoric influenced Muslim sentiment against the *Kuva-yi Milliye*. Anzavur also avoided the issues of taxation and compulsory military service, two unpopular policies employed by the *Kuva-yi Milliye*; this increased his support among ordinary people. In this regard, Anzavur Ahmed’s movement was more of a threat to the *Kuva-yi Milliye* than the Greek occupation. The internal struggle in the South Marmara between Anzavur Ahmed and the nationalists could lead to a reduction in support for the *Kuva-yi Milliye*.¹⁹⁹ His criticism of Mustafa Kemal and his circle was especially harsh. He described Mustafa Kemal as a rebel. Anzavur Ahmed also promised that he would save the Anatolian people from Mustafa Kemal’s cruelty for the sake of the fatherland and the Sultan.²⁰⁰

The Nationalists were fully cognisant of the Circassian support for Anzavur Ahmed. They aimed to divide the Circassians into two groups to strengthen the *Kuva-yi Milliye* in the region.²⁰¹ Otherwise, they thought they would be unable pursue their

¹⁹⁷ Çarıklı, *Balıkesir ve Alaşehir*, 100. Whether or not there existed a ‘Turkish–Circassian issue’ was indeed a matter of discussion. On 6 January 1920 Mustafa Kemal asked Bekir Sami via telegram whether during the Anzavur incident there was contact between the Circassian bandit leaders, Çerkez Şevket, Şah İsmail, Çerkes Ethem, Yusuf İzzet Paşa and Ahmet Fevzi Paşa. According to Mustafa Kemal this contact among the Circassians and the support from the military officers could lead to a conflict between Turks and Circassians. See TTK. Bekir Sami dosya 16, 598-599-600.

¹⁹⁸ The Damat Ferid Paşa government decided to make him a Paşa in 7th of April 1920. They were then planning to give to his soldiers official Ottoman military uniforms. PRO/FO 371/5047 – E 3673/3/44. April 23 1920. Ferid Paşa also tried to convince the British delegates to aid them in terms of military equipment since, he argued, that if Anzavur Ahmed had more arms and munitions, he could be more successful against the nationalists. See the same document. PRO/FO 371/5047 – E 3673/3/44. April 23 1920.

¹⁹⁹ Kazım Özalp believed that Anzavur’s success was worse than Greek advance in Anatolia for them. Özalp, *Milli Mücadele*, 112.

²⁰⁰ “Ahmed Anzavur Paşa”, *İkdam Gazetesi*, 26 April 1920. It worthy that both sides saw the other as rebels. Mustafa Kemal also referred to Anzavur as the who tried to create division among the national forces TİTE. K20G37B37001.

²⁰¹ Bekir Sami claims that the *Kuva-yi Milliye* could undermine the Anzavur uprising if they could divide the Circassians in two separate groups in the region. See TTK. Bekir Sami dosya 14, 329 and TTK. Bekir Sami dosya 15, 449-450-451-452.

activities in the region. It can also be said that there were differences between the *Kuva-yi Milliye* and Anzavur Ahmed in terms of their attitude towards the residents of the region. For instance, the *Kuva-yi Milliye* threatened and cajoled the local population through force to acquire their support against the Greek occupation and Ahmed Anzavur. By contrast, Ahmed Anzavur sought the support of local people via non-coercive means. His written declarations against the nationalists were often enough to gain the backing of the masses in the field.

Conclusion

In the days and months following the Great War, violence and conflict became widespread throughout the South Marmara region, and bandits and gangs became features of daily life. The main characteristic features of these groups were their ethnicity, which separated them from ‘others’. However, the conflicts were generally local and limited to their districts. With the Greek occupation of Western Anatolia, two new main groups emerged in the region: the loyalists and the nationalists. Existing armed groups later joined one of the new groups, while continuing their bandit activities. It is noteworthy that the loyalist movement was united on an Islamic basis. The loyalists mobilised people by emphasising their ties with the Caliphate and the Sultanate. Circassian ethnicity also played an important role in the strengthening of the loyalist movement. Anzavur Ahmed used Circassian ethnicity to solidify his movement, which was based in towns populated by Circassians. Meanwhile, the national movement also tried to use Circassian ethnicity gain an advantage. At the beginning, this was used to develop a line of resistance against the Greek occupation, and relied on Circassian networks in South Marmara. However, with the emergence of the anti-nationalist movement, the nationalists encouraged Çerkes Ethem to battle against the anti-nationalists. The conflict between the loyalists and nationalists then became an intra-community struggle between Çerkes Ethem and

Anzavur Ahmed. The conflict also forced the nationalists to think more deeply about the existence of Circassians in the region. As will be explored later, the Gönen-Manyas deportations can be seen as a deliberate nationalist attempt to reduce the density of the Circassian population in the region.

Chapter Three: Civil War in the Empire: Adapazarı-Düzce and Yozgat Incidents (1920)

Introduction

In the history of the modern republic of Turkey, the Adapazarı–Hendek–Düzce region first came to the attention of the media in 1996. The Susurluk Incident (one of the biggest scandals highlighting the extent of the police-mafia-state nexus in Turkey) followed a seemingly routine car crash in the Southern Marmara town of Susurluk. The bodies in the car included those of Abdullah Çatlı, who was wanted by Interpol, police chief Hüseyin Kocadağ, and Sedat Bucak, an MP and a leader of a pro-state tribe from Southeast Turkey; all except Sedat Bucak were pronounced dead at the scene. A parliamentary committee was established in order to investigate this curious web of relations and networks. The committee conducted hearings with politicians, bureaucrats, and suspects in the case. Additionally, individuals thought to be related to these people and their networks were also called upon to testify before the committee. Mehmet Hadi Özcan,²⁰² who was imprisoned as a leader of a local criminal group that was active in the İzmit-Adapazarı region, also appeared before the committee.

Below are some excerpts from his testimony:

Chair: Several extra-judicial executions have been carried out in this triangle, Kocaeli, Sakarya (Adapazarı), Sapanca, and Istanbul, and it so happens that the mafia groups are all based in this region. Why is this?

Mehmet Hadi Özcan: Because of the weather, I suppose! I don't know. (In obvious reference to a well-known Turkish expression that is generally used to make fun of questions that one is asked, or to water down the seriousness of the matter being discussed)

Chair: We also like the weather, but...

²⁰² He is a Circassian from Kırkpınar village of Sapanca/İzmit. Sadık Güleç, *Ölüm üçgeni : Bir şehir, Bir Kabadayı, Bir Mafya Babası* / 1. baskı, Profil ; Strateji-Analiz ; (Cağaloğlu, İstanbul : Profil Yayıncılık, 2013).

Mehmet Hadi Özcan: Indeed, it is all happening here, and they are all from around here.

Chair: But I do not think that it is simply because of the weather.²⁰³

Evidently, the weather is not the cause. In fact, this was not the first time that the region had been the focus of attention. Almost 75 years earlier, in 1920, an incident that took place in the region threatened the very survival of *Kuva-yi Milliye* in Ankara. This incident was led by a Circassian-dominated group who, despite their close relationships with the Ottoman government, were initially independent of it. The Ottoman government later used this situation to weaken the Ankara-based nationalists. The nationalists first sent an advisory delegation to calm down those who had taken up arms, but the Ankara government chose to use military force to suppress them when several members of the delegation were killed en route to a meeting with the anti-nationalist. Although a certain level of calm was initially achieved in the region, anti-*Kuva-yi Milliye* sentiments prevailed in the region, and opposition to the Ankara government continued. This opposition movement continued until the 1940s, and became a trans-border movement when its leading members were stripped of their citizenship and banished from the newly-established Turkish republic. This incident will be investigated in further detail in Chapter 6.

Although the Adapazarı–Düzce incidents appeared to be a limited opposition movement compared to other incidents of the era, both in terms of its geographical penetration and the after-effects of the incidents in the following decades, it retains a unique place in the historiography of modern Turkey. Indeed, the incidents broke out in a region that was situated very close to the headquarters of the national movement, thus

²⁰³BAŞKAN - Birtakım infazlar, babalar şunlar bunlar hep bu mıntıkada; İzmit, Sakarya, Sapanca, İstanbul üçgeninde oluyor, niye burada oluyor.

MEHMET HADİ ÖZCAN - Havasındandır, bilmiyorum.

BAŞKAN - Havası güzeldir; biz de beğendik havasını da...

MEHMET HADİ ÖZCAN - Hakikaten burada oluyor ama, ben bakıyorum öyle, hep buradan çıkıyor.

BAŞKAN - Hep havasından değil gibi geliyor bana?

01.03.1997 Hadi Özcan's statement to the Susurluk Investigation Committee,

<http://www.kocaelimeydan.com/gundem/bir-mafya-babasinin-itiraflari-h11394.html> accessed 21/08/2015.

forcing the Ankara government to prepare for relocating parliament to the town of Sivas.²⁰⁴ The leaders of the incidents were either killed by the nationalists, or they moved abroad and continued their opposition to the nationalist cause (later known as the Kemalist cause) over the following years. This chapter argues that the suppression of the anti-nationalist movements of Adapazarı–Düzce and Yozgat strengthened Çerkes Ethem’s position in the nationalist cause. Moreover, it claims that, in order to unite the people against the Greek occupation and the anti-nationalists, Ethem took extremely harsh measures against the anti-nationalists, without differentiating between Turks, Circassians, Muslims or non-Muslims. It could be said that, without Ethem’s military forces and actions, it would not have been possible for the Ankara government to gain acceptance as the de facto government from the people of Anatolia. This chapter will demonstrate why the Adapazarı–Düzce incidents occupy a significant place in the history of Turkey, particularly during the transformation from empire to nation state. Firstly, this chapter will examine the Circassian opposition to the Ankara-based nationalists in the Adapazarı–Düzce region. Secondly, it will focus on how one key paramilitary leader of the period, Çerkes Ethem, became one of the most powerful people in the country after suppressing another incident in Yozgat.

1 – The Adapazarı–Düzce Incidents

The Adapazarı–Düzce region was extremely important for both the Istanbul and Ankara governments, as gaining the support of the local people could change the balance of power for either side in the conflict. During the period after WWI, there were many armed people and armed groups in this area. Geographically, the region was sandwiched between the territories controlled by the opposing governments in Istanbul and Ankara.

²⁰⁴ Anti-*Kuva-yi Milliye* movement reached to the Yabanaban town of Ankara which was only 30 km far Ankara. Halide Edib Adivar, *Türkün Ateşle-İmtihanı : (İstiklâl Savaşı Hâtıraları)* / (Istanbul : Çan yayını, 1962). 144, 137,138.

Therefore, this was, strategically speaking, a very significant location. For the Ankara government, the region was a transit zone for sending Ottoman military arms from the arsenals in Istanbul to Anatolia. The main railway lines from Istanbul to west and central Anatolia passed through this region and, during the civil war, maintaining control over the railway line and the region was vital. Moreover, the Ankara government was greatly concerned about armed mobilisation in the region, which, although both geographically and politically closer to the Ottoman Porte, was only one day's journey from Ankara. The conflict, which initially surfaced in the Adapazarı–Düzce region, moved closer to Ankara with each passing day, where the government did not have a sufficiently well-prepared army.

The Adapazarı–Düzce region was also vital for Ankara-based nationalists in Istanbul, who passed through the region on their way to Ankara. The *Karakol*²⁰⁵, which organised the nationalists' escape from Istanbul, was a powerful organisation in the region, but was being threatened by Rum, Armenian bandits, and Palace-supported anti-nationalist Circassians. The local Laz, an ethnic group that originates from the Black Sea coast, were mobilised by *Karakol* against anti-nationalist groups in the region. Local small-boat captains, Ramiz and Rauf of Hopa, as well as Dr Refik of Trabzon, Meto Hüseyin, and Mehmet Bey, were recruited to the nationalist cause by *Karakol*, and Yenibahçeli Şükrü was appointed as the general commander of the region.²⁰⁶ Although Ali Fuat Paşa (Cebesoy)²⁰⁷ believed that the significance of the incident was exaggerated by the Ankara government due to the reports that it received from local unit commanders, the incident was, nevertheless, the single biggest threat facing Ankara at that time. The

²⁰⁵ Pro-nationalist, a resistance group which was led by two prominent CUP figures, Kara Kemal and Vasif Bey.

²⁰⁶ Ali Fuat Cebesoy, *Millî Mücadele Hâtıraları* / , 2. baskı., Temel Yayınları Sertifika No ; (İstanbul : Temel, 2010), 440.

²⁰⁷ Ali Fuat Paşa (Cebesoy) 1882-1968. General, diplomat, and politician. He was the commander of Western Front in the early days of the Turkish War of Independence, and then he was appointed as the Ambassador for Turkey in Moscow.

Ankara government began to panic and, in an attempt to quell the incident, the government diverted army units from the western and southern fronts to the region, even though those troops did not have sufficient preparation and training for confronting the local anti-nationalists.

A group of Circassian notables attempted to gain the control of the region. Their aim was to maintain their control of the region by holding on to the prominence that they enjoyed in the post-World War I period, and they sought the support of Istanbul government. Some members of the Ottoman Palace, such as *Baş Mabeyinci* Yaver Paşa, contacted Circassian notables in the hope of convincing them to rise up against the Ankara government²⁰⁸ with the help of well-armed local Circassian villagers in İzmit, Sapanca, Hendek and Düzce. One of the reasons the Porte had gained support so fast, was the great respect and affinity the locals felt towards the Ottoman Sultan and the Caliph, as well as the presence in the Ottoman government, bureaucracy, army, and security structures, of a significant number of Circassians from the region, who commanded respect among the local Circassians and had relatives amongst them. Furthermore, the presence of Circassian women in the Ottoman Harem also played a part here.²⁰⁹ Not only did the leaders of the incident gain the support of the local people, they were also able to influence the army units that were stationed in the region.²¹⁰

The people of the region had no sympathies for the CUP rule and considered the nationalists of Ankara to be a continuation of the CUP, which was thought by many to be responsible for the disastrous outcomes in WWI. The fact that the region had been engaged in several long-lasting wars, from the Balkan wars of 1912-13 to October 1918, when their involvement in WWI ended, was another reason for the incident. Specifically,

²⁰⁸ Cebesoy, *Millî Mücadele Hâtıraları*, 427.

²⁰⁹ There were girls from the Adapazarı-Düzce region in the Ottoman Harem; for an example see the report of a lady from Maan (the family of Kayalar village) see BOA.DH.MKT 2270/81 document 1. 4 May 1320 (1904).

²¹⁰ Cebesoy, *Millî Mücadele Hâtıraları*, 427-428.

war-weariness was a problem in the region, which had been in a constant state of war since the early 1910s. Although the country was under occupation, many ordinary people were against military mobilisation.²¹¹ The local notables, on the other hand, took a less strict stance towards either the Istanbul government or the nationalists in Anatolia. For the most part, they depended on their own personal networks and on the dynamics of local politics. For instance, Sait Bey worked for the *Kuva-yi Milliye* in the Adapazarı region, but his local rival, Çerkes Hikmet, also sought a position in the local *Kuva-yi Milliye* branch; he was prevented by his rivals from joining the branch, which was also controlled by members of the CUP that Çerkes Hikmet opposed. Consequently, Çerkes Hikmet began recruiting people who supported the Istanbul government, rather than *Kuva-yi Milliye*.²¹²

The Adapazarı–Düzce region first attracted the attention of Mustafa Kemal on 20 October 1919. In a telegram sent by the commander of the First Division, Mustafa Asım, to Mustafa Kemal, the former explained that a group of Circassian and Abkhazians led by Bekir, Beslan, and Talustan Beys, had tried to recruit people in the town of Akyazı by declaring that they would not accept Mustafa Kemal as a replacement for the Sultan, and had tried to set up a local government.²¹³ Two pro-Ankara Circassians were sent by Mustafa Asım to gather information about the incident.²¹⁴ A few days later, with the support of local Circassians and military units stationed in the area, the group was routed out of the town.²¹⁵

²¹¹ Hüsrev Gerede, *Hüsrev Gerede'nin Anıları : Kurtuluş Savaşı, Atatürk ve Devrimler (19 Mayıs 1919-10 Kasım 1938)* /; (İstanbul : Literatür, 2003), 202-203.

²¹² Kemal Atatürk, *Nutuk*, (İstanbul : Devlet Matbaası, 1934). Volume 3, document 174, 206.

²¹³ Atatürk, *Nutuk*. Volume 3, document 162, 196-197. Mustafa Kemal believes that these Circassians were backed by the British. Adnan Sofuoğlu, *Milli Mücadele Döneminde Kocaeli* (Ankara: AKDITYK Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 2006), 64-66.

²¹⁴ Atatürk, *Nutuk*. Document 162, 196. One of these Circassians was Safer Bey, who would change sides and take a position in the local government of Adapazarı.

²¹⁵ Ibid, volume 3, document 162, 198-199.

Public order had already broken down in Adapazarı and the surrounding areas after WWI. Some Circassians and Abkhazians were actively engaging in banditry in the region.²¹⁶ In the early days of the national movement, a struggle between the Ankara and Istanbul governments had already begun in Adapazarı–Düzce over authority and control of the region. Çerkes Bekir of Adapazarı went to the region to recruit people to the Special Organisation, which was controlled by the national movement at that time.²¹⁷ However, Bekir’s propaganda for the nationalist cause was unsuccessful. The elders of the Circassian community in Düzce did not accept Bekir’s offer of working for the *Kuva-yi Milliye*.²¹⁸ Approximately ten days later, he came to Adapazarı to recruit people; as in Düzce, his attempt ended in failure.²¹⁹ On 24 February 1920, Kuşçubaşı Eşref Bey,²²⁰ who used the title ‘Commander of the Mujahedeen of Turkey’ (Türkiye Umum Mücahidin Kumandanı) and had been appointed to the position of commander of the *Kuva-yi Milliye* forces in İzmit, Adapazarı, and Bolu, came to Kandıra, a town in Adapazarı, with the objective of preventing any anti-*Kuva-yi Milliye* uprisings in the region.²²¹ Eşref arrived in Adapazarı on 3 April 1920 accompanied by dozens of mounted infantry soldiers.²²²

However, he also failed in his attempt to gain the support of the locals for the nationalist cause. One possible explanation for this failure is that the local Circassian notables did not think that his family’s rank in the Circassian hierarchy was high enough,

²¹⁶ BOA.DH.ŞFR. 104/136, 1 Teşrinisani 1335 (1 November 1919). Çerkes Said Bey was the leader of bandits in Adapazarı at the time.

²¹⁷ BOA.DH.KMS. 53-3/36 document 1, 14 September 1335 (1919).

²¹⁸ BOA.DH.KMS. 53-3/36 document 2, 16 September 1335 (1919).

²¹⁹ BOA.DH.KMS. 53-3/36 document 2, 16 September 1335 (1919).

²²⁰ Kuşçubaşı Eşref Sencer, 1873-1964. Circassian descent. He was agent in the Ottoman Special Organisation ‘*Teşkilatı Mahsusa*’. In the early days of the Turkish War of Independence he worked for the nationalists, and then moved to the opposite side.

²²¹ BOA.DH.EUM.AYŞ 33/ 76, 2 March 1920. BOA.DH.KMS 53-4/ 47 document 3. 17 April 1336 (1920). Rükü Özkök, *Milli Mücadele Başlarken Düzce – Bolu İsyanları* (İstanbul: Milliyet Yayın Ltd. Şti. Yayınları Tarih Kitapları Dizisi, 1971).244.

²²² PRO/FO 371/5047 E3731/3/44, 23 April-24 April 1920, a telegram from Admiral Webb in İstanbul, document no 133. According to same document that Eşref Bey was released from Malta in February 1920.

even though Eşref was a well-known agent in the Special Organisation and his family had links to the Ottoman Palace because of his father's role there.²²³ One could be from the palace, but not a Circassian noble. As a result, Eşref was unable to gain control in the region. Çerkes Kanbulat Sait of Adapazarı was wary of Eşref's activities and mobilised a group to oust Eşref. Although this movement was initially directed against Eşref's activities, it later turned into an anti-*Kuva-yi Milliye* uprising. Eşref had to escape from Adapazarı with only thirty armed men. Those who failed to escape were imprisoned and beaten by the anti-nationalists, the majority of whom were Circassians.²²⁴ Kanbulat and his helpers first moved to Adapazarı, but later headed towards Hendek. In the town of Çatalköprü, they destroyed the bridges that connected Adapazarı with Hendek.²²⁵

On April 13, anti-*Kuva-yi Milliye* Circassians and Abkhazians held a meeting in the Ömer Efendi village of Düzce and started another incident.²²⁶ The telegraph lines were broken, military buildings were attacked, and a captain and an officer were killed.²²⁷ Military ammunitions were taken over by the anti-nationalists; prisoners were released from the military prison and the town jail, and the anti-nationalists recruited people into their own gendarme force. They seized official positions in Düzce and appointed Berzeg Safer Bey as governor and Maan Ali²²⁸ as commander of the gendarme force, made Vahap responsible for subsistence and reinforcement (iaşe ve ikmal), and named Koç Bey as mayor of the town.²²⁹ On April 18, the leaders of the incident met in *Paşa Karyesi* and

²²³ Adnan Sofuoğlu, *Milli Mücadele Döneminde Kocaeli* (Ankara: AKDITYK Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 2006) 60,61.

²²⁴ PRO/FO 371, 5167, E5039/262/44. 23 April 1920-20May 1920 a report from Admiral Webb in 23 April 1920 page 106.

²²⁵ Özkök, *Milli Mücadele Başlarken Düzce – Bolu İsyanları*. 244.

²²⁶ ATASE.İSH. 274/ 23, 13 April 1336 (1920), ATASE.İSH. 527/43, 25 April 1336 (1920). M. Zekai Konrapa, *Bolu Tarihi* (Bolu: Bolu Vilayet Matbaası, 1964), 724. Sina Akşin claims that about four thousand people came together in Ömer Efendi, see Sina Akşin, *İç Savaş ve Sevr'de Ölüm* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, 2010), 65-66.

²²⁷ Captain Avni Efendi and officer Rahiskar Efendi were killed. BOA.DH.EUM.AYŞ. 51, document 2, 24 April 1336 (1920). Özkök, *Milli Mücadele Başlarken Düzce – Bolu İsyanları*.247,248.

²²⁸ He was member of Ottoman Special Organisation during WWI as Major. He was in Iraq front, and served under the *Osmancık* volunteer regiment. See Semih Nafiz Tansu, *Cumhuriyet Newspaper*, 31 July 1956. 2

²²⁹ Akşin, *İç Savaş ve Sevr'de Ölüm*. 65-66.

made a declaration, in which they openly stated that they were not hostile towards the Istanbul government.²³⁰ A group of the anti-nationalists, which comprised people from the twenty-seven different villages of the Düzce–Bolu region,²³¹ attacked military units in Bolu and Düzce and seized their arms.²³² Since the local governor of Bolu also backed the anti-nationalist movement, he was able to convince them to go back to their villages. The Ankara government sent a group of MPs to negotiate with the local leaders and put an end to the anti- *Kuva-yi Milliye* movement; this group included Hüsrev, Fuat, Şükrü, and Hüseyin Beys, and was accompanied by a cavalry detachment.²³³ On 20 April, another group of anti-nationalists came to Bolu from Gerede to occupy the local governor’s building and to complain about the Ankara government and local bureaucrats who were loyal to Ankara. As a result of this occupation, the anti-nationalists declared that they would not recognise any government apart from that of the Sultan, and that they would not join any government army except that demanded by Istanbul. Communication channels would only remain open with Istanbul, and not with Ankara. In addition, the clerks of the Telegraph Office of Bolu would be replaced, and only the government in Istanbul would be allowed to collect taxes from the region.²³⁴

The Ankara government sent its military detachments from Adapazarı to Düzce to suppress the incident, which was close to reaching the outskirts of Ankara, but they were defeated by the anti-nationalists, of whom there were more than two thousand (the majority of whom were Circassian).²³⁵ In Düzce, Hendek, and Adapazarı, all senior nationalist military officers were arrested; more than eight hundred foot soldiers were

²³⁰ BOA.DH.EUM.AYŞ. 40/51, document 2, 24 April 1336 (1920).

²³¹ Konrapa, *Bolu Tarih*, 724.

²³² 30 guns and 10.000 shotshells were seized from one military unit. BOA.DH.EUM.AYŞ. 40/51, document 3, 24 April 1336 (1920).

²³³ The Secret Session Records of the Grand National Assembly, Secret Session 2, 24 April 1920, 8. <http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/GZC/d01/CILT01/gcz01001002.pdf>. accessed 14/11/2014.

²³⁴ BOA.DH.EUM.AYŞ. 40/51, document 3, 24 April 1336 (1920).

²³⁵ BOA.DH.EUM.AYŞ. 39/37, document 3. 24 April 1336 (1920), BOA.DH.EUM.AYŞ 39-41, document 3.

discharged, and their arms and ammunitions were confiscated by the anti-nationalists,²³⁶ who were led by Berzeg Sefer Bey.²³⁷ Lieutenant Colonel Mahmut, who was also Circassian, was sent by Mustafa Kemal to convince the Circassians to end their anti-nationalist activities in the region. He left the Yağbasan village of Hendek on 21 April,²³⁸ and was on his way to Düzce when he was confronted by a group of armed men, most of whom were Abkhazians. They were accompanied by other Abkhazian troops under Mahmut Bey's command. Initially, the meeting was friendly and Mahmud Bey's troops and the anti-nationalist Abkhazians began marching together towards Düzce. However, at some point on the 23 April 1920, an Abkhazian from the anti-nationalist group shot Mahmut Bey²³⁹ and killed a further three people who were sent by Ankara as an 'advice council', with the task of reaching an agreement between the Ankara government and the anti-nationalists in village of Budaklar of Hendek.²⁴⁰ Following these incidents, no *Kuva-yi Milliye* sympathisers remained in the region.²⁴¹ The region was now entirely under the control of the anti-nationalists, who put forward the demands of the Istanbul government via the commander of the gendarme force of Bolu, Osman Nuri, on 24 April 1920.²⁴² They stated that the Sultan and his government (i.e. the Istanbul government) were the only legitimate authorities in the empire, only the Ministry of War should have the authority to recruit people into the army, telegram communication should be opened with the Istanbul government and cut with Ankara, and tax should only be collected by the Ministry of Finance.²⁴³

²³⁶ BOA.DH.EUM.AYŞ. 39/41, document 3.

²³⁷ BOA.DH.EUM.AYŞ. 39/37, document 3. 24 April 1336 (1920) Berzeg Sefer Bey was a member of a local and well known family in the region.

²³⁸ Cebesoy, *Millî Mücadele Hâtıraları* /, 2010. 424 – 426.

²³⁹ Ibid. 426 – 427, Akşin, *İç Savaş ve Sevr'de Ölüm*.67-68.

²⁴⁰ Kanbolatzade Said, Abaza Kazım and Halim were also killed along with Mahmut Bey. BOA.DH.EUM.AYŞ. 39/37 24/4/1920. Sofuoğlu, *Millî Mücadele Döneminde Kocaeli.*, 96.

²⁴¹ BOA.DH.EUM.AYŞ. 39/37, 24 April 1920. document 2.

²⁴² BOA.DH.EUM.AYŞ. 39/41, document 3.

²⁴³ Fahri Yetim, "Millî Mücadele Döneminde İsyanların Gölgesinde Düzce ve Çevresinde Asayiş Sorunları," *Hacettepe Üniv. Cumhuriyet Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi*, no. 13 (2011): 66.

Ankara subsequently sent a group of MPs and military men to the region. This group included Hüsrev (Gerede) Bey, whose memoirs are an important source for understanding the incident.²⁴⁴ When the group arrived in Gerede, they were surrounded by anti-nationalists and were taken as hostages.²⁴⁵ It is worth noting that Islamic rhetoric and rituals were practised by the anti-nationalists during the incident in order to encourage local people to rise up against the Ankara government. Although there were Turks among the anti-nationalists, the majority of the participants were Circassian.²⁴⁶ The leader of the anti-nationalists, Berzeg Sefer Bey, visited Hüsrev Bey in prison, where he explained to him that he was against Mustafa Kemal and his friends because he wanted to prevent them from establishing a military dictatorship in Turkey.²⁴⁷

On 2 May 1920, Bolu was taken by the *Kuva-yi Milliye* forces, which consisted of 500 cavalry and foot soldiers under the command of the Lieutenant Colonel Arif Bey.²⁴⁸ Two days after Arif Bey had taken control of the city; it was surrounded by forces belonging to the Istanbul government. As a result, one hundred soldiers were captured as prisoners of war by the anti-nationalists. Arif Bey was forced to leave the city, which fell into the hands of the Istanbul government on 13 May 1920.²⁴⁹ However, the nationalists did not cease their activities; they had different cells and networks in several other cities in Anatolia and used all possible means of collecting intelligence in the Adapazarı-Düzce region. For this purpose, Eşref's brother Ahmed, a reserve officer, and his friend, Lieutenant Ahmed Adli Bey, travelled from Istanbul to İzmit, pretending to be merchants.

²⁴⁴ Except he tries to give some narrow Kemalist explanations in terms of the reasons for the incident, such as 'religious backwardness', or the ignorance of the people, and the activities of 'turbaned Muslim preachers'.

²⁴⁵ BOA.DH.EUM.AYŞ. 39/41, 25 April 1336 (1920).

²⁴⁶ Gerede, *Hüsrev Gerede'nin Anıları*. 194,195.

²⁴⁷ Ibid. 197,198.

²⁴⁸ BOA.DH.EUM.AYŞ.40/79, 15 May 1336 (1920). document 2.

²⁴⁹ BOA.DH.EUM.AYŞ. 40/79, 15 May 1336 (1920). document 2. It is also noteworthy to mention that *Kuva-yi Milliye* was called '*Kuva-yi Bağıyye*' by the Istanbul government, which means the forces of those who rebel against the government.

However, on completion of their journey through the region, they were arrested by the Istanbul government on May 1920.²⁵⁰

By May 1920, the region had already become a centre of the anti-nationalist movement. This movement did not only involve Circassians of Düzce; anti-*Kuva-yi Milliye* uprisings also flared up in Adapazarı and İzmit. Most of these involved three main opposition groups that were operating in the region. The first group was from the Düzce-Bolu region and consisted of Circassians and Abkhazians under the leadership of Berzeg Sefer. The second group was made up of the forces led by Ahmed Anzavur,²⁵¹ who was also active outside South Marmara and had the potential to pose a serious threat to the Ankara government in Adapazarı. He demonstrated this by organising a raid on Boğazköy on 10 May 1919, in which he led around five hundred armed men, some of whom were from the villages of Hamidiye, Kemaliye, and Kumbaşı in Adapazarı. He occupied the region for six days, attacking the troops of Ali Fuat Paşa with two thousand soldiers from the Army of Caliphate on 15 May, and taking full control of the entire region on 24 May.²⁵² However, his victory was short lived, as he was defeated two days later by a joint Cebesoy–Ethem force on May 26, the latter of which had recently reached the town of Hendek.²⁵³ Finally, the third opposition group was from the town of İzmit, where Çule İbrahim Hakkı²⁵⁴ was the governor.²⁵⁵

As a response to the threat posed by the anti-nationalist Circassians, the Ankara government also attempted to use Circassians from other regions against them. With the

²⁵⁰ BOA.DH.EUM.AYŞ.40/20, 6 May 1336 (1920).

²⁵¹ TİTE. K314G25B25-1001, 23 May 1336 (1920) a letter report from Refet Bey to Ali Fuat Paşa.

²⁵² Cebesoy, *Millî Mücadele Hâtıraları*, 464-465.

²⁵³ Ibid, 469. However, in one of the secret session in the assembly in May 17 the MPs were informed that Ali Fuat Paşa had the control in May 16. See the secret session of the assembly *Grand National Assembly, Secret session 17*, 17 May 1336 (1920). <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/GZC/d01/CILT01/gcz01001017.pdf>, accessed 14/11/2014, 31.

²⁵⁴ He was also known as İbrahim ‘the English’ (*İngiliz İbrahim*) due to his relationships with the British. He was a CUP opponent as majority of the post WWI period bureaucrats, who were appointed by the Istanbul government.

²⁵⁵ TİTE. K314G2B2001, 22, 23 May 1336 (1920), a report from the Minister of War of the Ankara government, İsmet Bey (İnönü), to Ali Fuat Paşa.

outbreak of the incident, the nationalists in Ankara considered arming Circassians from the towns of Haymana and Bala (near Ankara) and deploying them in Bolu, but later concluded that arming the Haymana and Bala Circassians would pose security risks in the future, as they might join their fellow Circassians in Düzce and Adapazarı. Thus, these plans never came to fruition.²⁵⁶ The Damad Ferid Paşa government in Istanbul also went to great lengths to persuade local Circassians in other parts of Anatolia to create difficulties for the *Kuva-yi Milliye*, which aimed to end the national movement before a possible civil war began. At times, the British also favoured the anti-nationalists. It is important to remember that the British put pressure on the Ottoman government to sign the peace treaty with the Allies before the Ottoman delegation was sent to the conference in Sèvres, France. In a meeting between Damad Ferid Paşa, a British military representative, and General Milne on 20 April 1920, it was stated that support in the form of ammunition and guns would be provided to Ahmed Anzavur's forces, and also to those of İbrahim in Yalova.²⁵⁷ İbrahim, who was probably the commander of the gendarme force in Yalova, had approximately 1,500 soldiers. The plan was to combine these forces in order to create a bigger anti-*Kuva-yi Milliye* force in South Marmara.²⁵⁸ During that meeting, it was also decided that Ahmed Anzavur would take Bursa from the nationalists before moving to Yalova in the north in order to join İbrahim and his forces. The aim of this plan was to enable them to solidify their presence in İzmit and re-occupy Eskişehir.²⁵⁹ For that purpose, and to strengthen Anzavur's position, Damad Ferid gave him the title of Paşa in April 1920.²⁶⁰ Damad Ferid needed the support of the Circassians of İzmit, Adapazarı, Sinop, and central Anatolia in order to succeed in his anti-nationalist policies. He sent fixers from Istanbul to these regions to organise the local Circassians into an anti-

²⁵⁶ ATASE.İSH. 274/4. 23 4 1336 and 25 4 1336 (23-25 April 1920).

²⁵⁷ PRO/FO 371/5048, E4635/3/44, 11th May 1920 – 12th May 1920, page 29.

²⁵⁸ PRO/FO 371/5047, E4272/3/44, 12 April 1920-6 May 1920, document number 130. A report from the British High Commission in Istanbul.

²⁵⁹ PRO/FO 371/5048, E4635/3/44, 11th May 1920 – 12th May 1920, page 30.

²⁶⁰ PRO/FO 371/5047, E3673/Z/44, 8th April 1920 – 23rd April 1920, page 22.

nationalist cause.²⁶¹ Some local Circassian notables from the Adapazarı–Düzce area were invited to Istanbul to make promises and guarantee that they would be loyal to the Ottoman government and the Palace.²⁶² In addition, the British considered Anzavur to be a favourable person, as he enjoyed a great deal of support from local people and was not involved in any lootings or other such crimes.²⁶³ One of the primary concerns of the British was ensuring the security of the Bosphorus under their occupation. Therefore, İzmit, a city located at the gates of the Bosphorus, had a significant place in British policy.²⁶⁴

A further British policy involved retaining control of Istanbul and the Çanakkale (Gallipoli) straits. Strategically speaking, the straits occupied a crucial position. If the British had the straits, they could control shipping traffic between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. Moreover, this would ensure that the Ottoman capital, Istanbul, would remain safe under British occupation. Ankara believed that the British implemented this policy by backing the local Circassian notable Ahmed Anzavur, in order to create a buffer zone between their occupied territory and the *Kuva-yi Milliye* controlled area in the Marmara region.²⁶⁵ İsmet (İnönü) Bey also claimed that, from the Black Sea town of Şile to the gulf of Edremit in the Aegean Sea, the region would be secured by Ahmed Anzavur on behalf of the British forces. The aim of this collaboration was to prevent any armed conflict between the British forces and the *Kuva-yi Milliye* forces: Ahmed Anzavur would act as a barrier between them. The British aimed to turn the Marmara region into a buffer zone by saving it from nationalist forces. Furthermore, the Ankara government believed

²⁶¹ PRO/FO 371, 5167, E4510/262/44, 10th May 1920 a report from the Director of Military Intelligence, in 1st April 1920, page 66.

²⁶² Sofuoğlu, *Milli Mücadele Döneminde Kocaeli.*, 86,87.

²⁶³ PRO/FO 371, 5167, E4510/262/44, 10th May, 1920 a report from Director of Military Intelligence, in 1st April 1920, page 48. According to the same document page 49, the Ottoman government sought a way to raise anti-nationalist sentiment in the Kurdish dominated regions of Anatolia.

²⁶⁴ PRO/FO 371/5048, E5241/3/44, 25th May 1920 – 26th May 1920, page 117.

²⁶⁵ *Grand National Assembly, Secret session* 21, 29 May 1336 (1920)

<http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/GZC/d01/CILT01/gcz01001021.pdf>. Accessed 14/11/2014, 41.

that, when the incident began in the Adapazarı-Düzce region, this concern caused Anzavur to move to the region so that he could mobilise more people against Ankara.²⁶⁶ However, British documents show that Ankara exaggerated both the involvement of the British in the civil war between the Istanbul and Ankara governments and its support for the anti-nationalists in the region and their leaders, such as Anzavur Ahmed. The British representative in Istanbul was not willing to become involved in the struggle between the two governments, even though it formally backed the Istanbul government. The British also complained about their allies in Anatolia, namely the Italian and French forces, since the Italians were not against the nationalists of Ankara, and the French made it difficult for the British to pursue their policy.²⁶⁷ It seems that, in such circumstances, Britain backed the Damad Ferid government in order to advance its own interests. It avoided having direct connections with the armed anti-nationalists in Anatolia, such as Ahmed Anzavur, because of the rumours surrounding its policies and the increasing level of anti-British sentiments in Anatolia.²⁶⁸

For Ankara, and particularly for Mustafa Kemal, the main enemy was not the British or Greek forces, but rather the Damad Ferid Paşa, his circle, and the domestic problems that Ankara believed to be the main threats to the continuity of the *Kuva-yi Milliye* movement.²⁶⁹ The priority of the Ankara government was quelling the uprisings, rather than fighting the occupation forces; if it failed to retain control over Anatolia in this chaotic situation, it would be easy for the occupation forces to execute their plans. Nevertheless, the leaders of the anti-nationalist movement, such as Mustafa Kemal, avoided making negative remarks about the Sultan in public, even though the Ankara

²⁶⁶ Ibid, 41.

²⁶⁷ PRO/FO 371/5048, E5552/3/44, 29th May 1920-31st May 1920, a telegram from General Milne page 197.

²⁶⁸ PRO/FO 371/5048, E5241/3/44. 25 May 1920, page 117.

²⁶⁹ *Grand National Assembly, Secret session* 26, 3 July 1336 (1920), <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/GZC/d01/CILT01/gcz01001026.pdf>, accessed 14/11/2014, 74.

government was engaged in a civil war with the Istanbul government and the anti-nationalists. In the minds of the people, the Sultan was not responsible for the disastrous situation in the empire. Although the nationalist forces were fighting the anti-nationalists, the Ankara government followed a policy of arguing that the Ottoman Sultan/Caliph was not free from British pressure in occupied Istanbul. According to Mustafa Kemal, the Sultan and the Istanbul government were two different entities, as he once claimed in the assembly. The Istanbul government, which was reformed on the orders of the Sultan many times during the occupation (due to British pressure), and particularly the Ferid Paşa cabinet, was held captive by the British. Mustafa Kemal noted that there was no need to send a delegation from the Ankara assembly to Istanbul to gain the support of the Sultan for the national movement, since the British occupation of Istanbul prevented the Sultan from openly declaring his support for the *Kuva-yi Milliye* movement. The assembly was already looking for a way to meet with the Sultan, and in order to do so, a secret contact would have to be found.²⁷⁰ He further argued that, even if he learnt that the Sultan was against the national movement, he would not believe it, and would ascribe any such declaration to British pressure on the Sultan.

2 - Çerkes Ethem in the Adapazarı-Düzce Region

As a paramilitary leader, Çerkes Ethem, would become one of the most dominant forces of the era. He was initially close to the national movement in Anatolia, and had enjoyed a good relationship with the bureaucratic elites of that movement ever since his military service during WWI, when he fought against the Russian and British forces in Iran and Afghanistan with the Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa,²⁷¹ under the command of his older

²⁷⁰ *Grand National Assembly, Secret session 2, 24 April 1336 (1920)*, <http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/GZC/d01/CILT01/gcz01001002.pdf>, accessed 14/11/2014, 8-9.

²⁷¹ The special forces of the Ottoman Empire.

brother, Reşit Bey.²⁷² Following the Mudros Armistice, Çerkes Ethem was in the town of Bandırma in South Marmara, where he was convinced by Rauf Bey (Orbay) to join the nationalist cause. He quickly organised his own paramilitary forces and set up the first lines of resistance against the Greek occupation. In addition, he developed his own strategies for collecting money from people in order to fund his paramilitary groups. Although he did use some resources that had been allocated to associations resisting against the Greek occupation to provide for the needs of his soldiers,²⁷³ he generally sustained his military units using money that had been forcibly gathered from notables in the region. His policies were not welcomed by the notables, who did not agree to pay voluntarily. In the territories that he controlled, Ethem enacted a number of relatively severe policies. He would stage sudden attacks on towns experiencing disorder, or those considered anti-*Kuva-yi Milliye*. After an armed clash, he usually took control and created military tribunals to carry out the trials of miscreants. The decisions of these tribunals tended to be very harsh: this was the single biggest complaint that locals and his own forces made about Ethem. The ongoing war and armed conflicts raging in the region meant that the tribunals had been given the authority to execute death sentences without following the proper legal process.

Ethem Bey's paramilitary group consisted of a large number of Circassians. He and his brothers refused to join the standing army, the establishment of which was being proposed by people in Ankara who had a background in the regular Ottoman Army. Indeed, his men had not been 'proper soldiers' in the first place, and they simply wanted to continue with their haphazard paramilitary activities.²⁷⁴ Taxes were an important financial resource that Ethem collected from notables in the region, although his methods

²⁷² Çerkes Ethem, *Anılarım* (İstanbul: Berfin Yayınları, 2005), 8.

²⁷³ Ibid. 8.

²⁷⁴ Genel Kurmay Harp Tarihi Dairesi, *Türk İstiklâl Harbi: İç ayaklanmalar (1919-1921)* (Genelkurmay Basımevi: Ankara, 1974), 216-217 quoted in Doğu Ergil, *Milli Mücadelenin Sosyal Tarihi* / Bilimsel Eserler Dizisi ; (Ankara : Turhan Kitabevi, 1981), 295.

of doing so were very unpopular: he would arrest those who refused to pay tax,²⁷⁵ and his militia would seize money, just like the common criminal bandits and paramilitary groups in the region. Ethem's militia was a powerful one, and was based on a wide-ranging kinship network with other Circassians in the region, while his social status as the son of a wealthy landowner also helped him to gain the respect of fellow Circassians.

After suppressing the first Anzavur incident, Çerkes Ethem was asked by İsmet (İnönü) Bey to move to Adapazarı–Düzce region so that he could also to quell the 'uprising' that was taking place there.²⁷⁶ On the way to the Adapazarı–Düzce region, Ethem decided to go to the town of Manyas, where Anzavur Ahmed's supporters had gathered to escape from Ethem's forces. After the first attack by Ethem's forces on the town, approximately 600 of Anzavur's men joined Ethem,²⁷⁷ while the remainder either fled to Istanbul or were killed in the skirmish. These additions to Ethem's forces gave him a total of about 5,000 cavalry men, all of whom had fine military equipment. In addition, he now had approximately 500 foot soldiers.²⁷⁸ On 29 April 1920, Ethem and his forces arrived first in Geyve, and then in then Sapanca and Adapazarı, where some people were sentenced to death.²⁷⁹ He suppressed the disorder that was prevailing there and took control of the area. An imam, a military captain, and ten civilians were hanged following a decision taken by his military tribunal.²⁸⁰ By taking control, he prevented the anti-nationalist forces from raiding, and subsequently terminating, the assembly in Ankara. Those who were heading towards Ankara in order to attack the assembly dispersed because they lacked adequate support from other anti-nationalists.²⁸¹

²⁷⁵ Emrah Cilasun, "*Baki ile Selam*" *Çerkes Ethem* (İstanbul: Belge Yayınları, 2004), 43.

²⁷⁶ Çerkes Ethem, *Anılarım*. 28.

²⁷⁷ Ibid. 30.

²⁷⁸ Ibid. 30.

²⁷⁹ Kuçbaşı Eşref tried to recruit İbrahim Efendi of Akyazı/Hacı Ahmed Bey village for his nationalist forces. İbrahim Efendi rejected this demand; however, when Ethem came to the region he was sentenced to death due to this. BOA.DH.KMS. 59-1/56, document 2, 24 July 1336 (1920), Çerkes Ethem, *Anılarım*, 32-33.

²⁸⁰ Ibid. 33.

²⁸¹ Ibid. 33.

Although Ethem was a man who was concerned mainly with war, he was in no doubt about the necessity of becoming involved in political matters from time to time. On 23 May 1920, before putting an end to the incident, he prepared three letters for Sultan Vahidettin, Sadrazam Damad Ferid Paşa, and the supreme military command in Istanbul. These letters clearly show why Ethem became involved in the nationalist struggle. In his first letter, which was written for Vahidettin, he argues that Damad Ferid was not an appropriate choice for the role of Sadrazam. Ethem claims that the Caliphate and Sultanate did not derive any benefits from Damad Ferid's method of administration, and that his policies led to people in Anatolia killing one another.²⁸² Ethem also emphasised that, while the *Kuva-yi Milliye* aimed to save the Sultan from occupation, Damad Ferid's policies divided people into different groups. Finally, he asked Vahidettin to dismiss Damad Ferid from the Sadrazamship, and to appoint people who had merit and were capable of doing the job.²⁸³ Moreover, Ethem also prepared a letter for Damad Ferid himself, in which he told him that the Ottoman administration had never been ruled by anyone with such a low level of capability. He blamed Damad Ferid for the problems in the state and accused him of being a traitor, as his policies had led to people killing one another.²⁸⁴ In his final letter, which was addressed to the supreme military commander in Istanbul, he also emphasised his concerns about Damad Ferid and reiterated his belief that he did not deserve the position that he held. Furthermore, he argued that Damad Ferid would never be capable of representing the Ottoman nation.²⁸⁵ However, the delivery of these three letters to Istanbul was prevented by Ali Fuat Paşa, who wanted Ethem to avoid becoming involved in politics so that he could focus instead on fighting the Greeks and quelling any uprisings against Ankara. Nevertheless, these letters tell us that Ethem was

²⁸² Ali Fuat Cebesoy, *Bilinmeyen Hatıralar* / Gözden geçirilmiş genişletilmiş 2.baskı, Temel Yayınları ; (İstanbul : Temel, 2005), 373.

²⁸³ Ibid. 374,375.

²⁸⁴ Ibid. 375,376.

²⁸⁵ Ibid. 377.

not an apolitical fighter who had no understanding of politics. The language used in the letters shows us that, if they were written by Ethem, he was an educated man. Even if the letters were not written by him, they still prove that he was surrounded by people who were very capable and astute, and who understood the political issues faced by the empire.

One night, while Hüsrev (Gerede) Bey was in prison, Berzeg Sefer Bey sent Ahmet Ağa to negotiate with him, in order reach an agreement with Mustafa Kemal on his behalf. Hüsrev Bey was secretly released from the prison and was brought to the house of Abdülgani Bey, one of the leading figures of the incident. He met with Berzeg Sefer Bey and Koç Bey, the commander of the gendarme force in Düzce. Sefer claimed that he was surprised by the news of the Sèvres Treaty²⁸⁶ and was filled with remorse about his initial hostility towards Ankara. Sefer asked Hüsrev Bey to negotiate with the Ankara government on his behalf and to ask for reconciliation.²⁸⁷ Although he was against the *Kuva-yi Milliye*, he was also against the partition of the Ottoman Empire that the Allies had stipulated in the terms of the Sèvres Peace Treaty, which would divide and colonise the Ottoman Empire under the rule of the Allies. While Hüsrev Bey travelled to Ankara via the other side of the front, Sefer Bey met with Refet (Bele) Bey on 24 May to negotiate the terms for ending his uprising.²⁸⁸

Although the leader of the incident in Düzce almost reached an agreement with Mustafa Kemal on ending it, Ethem moved towards Düzce via Geyve-Sapanca-Adapazarı. Anti-nationalists demanded that Refet Paşa, and not Ethem Bey, come to Düzce to meet with them so that he could evaluate the situation for himself. The leaders of the incident were concerned about the possibility of Ethem taking hasty action towards

²⁸⁶ Sevres Peace Treaty (10 August 1920) was imposed by the Allies on the Ottoman Empire. It was aimed by this treaty that the Ottoman Empire would be partitioned and colonized by the Allies. It was signed by the Ottoman Empire but it had never been implied since it was not confirmed by the Ottoman Assembly '*Meclis-i Mebusan*' and the Ankara government Forces defeated the Greeks and declared Turkey's independence.

²⁸⁷ TİTE. K314G25B25-1001, 23 May 1336 (1920). A telegram from Refet Bey to Ali Fuat Paşa. Gerede, *Hüsrev Gerede'nin Anıları*. 198-201.

²⁸⁸ Ibid. 198-201. Konrapa, *Bolu Tarihi*, 725.

Düzce, so they also sent him a telegram warning him not to act, as they were close to reaching an agreement with the Ankara government.²⁸⁹ However, Ethem ignored this request to wait, and moved towards Düzce. On 26 May, he captured the city without clashing with the anti-nationalists, who were planning to welcome him as a guest.²⁹⁰ He sent a telegram to Mustafa Kemal in Ankara, which contained a list of anti-nationalists who would be hanged, and asked for Mustafa Kemal's permission to carry out the executions.²⁹¹ After a long discussion, Sefer Bey's execution was not approved by Mustafa Kemal, since he had assisted with Hüsrev Bey's release from prison.²⁹² However, on 27 May 1920, about 50 people were hanged by Ethem's forces, including Sefer, Koç, Abdülgani, Abdülvehap, Rüştü the murderer, Kamil, Mehmet, Ali Galip Beys, Gürcü Hoca, and the major staff officer Hayri.²⁹³ In addition to these local people, seven high-ranking officers from the *Kuva-yi İnzibatiye* forces, who had come to the region to mobilise the people against the *Kuva-yi Milliye*, were also hanged on the 28 May. These officers were: Major Hayri, Lieutenant Ali Cerrah, İbrahim Ethem, Şerafettin, second lieutenant Suphi, İsmail Hakkı, Katip Hasan, deputy officer Mehmet, Ali Cenap, and Hurşit Beys.²⁹⁴ On the following day, the MPs Hacı Abdülvahap Bey, Müfti Çerkes Ahmet, İvranyalızade Hacı Emin, Hacı Hamdi, Komiteci Çubukluzade Sabri, and the lawyer Nuri Efendi of Mengen, were executed in front of the governor's mansion.²⁹⁵ In Bolu, gendarme lieutenant Fuat, trainee Fethullah of Bagdad, reserve officer Hafız İbrahim, Hafız Hamdi, Hayri Efendis, Yunus, Mehmet, Hafız Hakkı, and Bayram were

²⁸⁹ Çerkes Ethem, *Anılarım*. 35.

²⁹⁰ Konrapa, *Bolu Tarihi*, 726.

²⁹¹ Adivar, *Türkün Ateşle-İmtihani*, 140-141.

²⁹² Ibid. 140-141. Halide Edip claims that Mustafa Kemal agreed with Ethem to the hanging of Sefer Bey. However, Halide Edib and İsmet (İnönü) Bey were against this because Ankara had promised Sefer that they would save him from execution. They convinced Mustafa Kemal to not allow Ethem to hang Sefer.

²⁹³ Gerede, *Hüsrev Gerede'nin Anıları*. 200-201. According to Cebesoy, 45 people were hanged in Adapazarı, Hendek, Düzce and Bolu. see Cebesoy, *Bilinmeyen Hatıralar* /. 379. Konrapa, *Bolu Tarihi*, 726.

²⁹⁴ Ibid. 726.

²⁹⁵ Ibid. 726.

hanged by the *Kuva-yi Milliye* forces in the second week of June 1920.²⁹⁶ In the following weeks, Hoca Sadık Efendi of Çarşamba, Kör Ali, Abaza Ethem, a Rum priest, Çolak Hamdi, Hafız Abdullah, and Arif were also executed.²⁹⁷

The hanging of the Circassians in the Adapazarı–Düzce region by Ethem caused much debate among the Circassians of Turkey. As a paramilitary leader, he was responsible for executing a number of people before and after the Adapazarı–Düzce incidents. His forces usually hanged several people after taking control of towns, as was the case in Salihli, Gönen, Manyas, and Yozgat. However, the sanctions that he applied in those towns, were never as harsh as those that he chose to apply in Adapazarı–Düzce. According to Baki Çule, a native Circassian of Düzce,²⁹⁸ disagreements of a personal nature existed between Ethem and Sefer Bey long before the incident. He stated that Ethem and Sefer liked the same girl – this girl first became Ethem’s *kaşen*²⁹⁹ but later married Sefer.³⁰⁰ Consequently, Ethem violently punished Sefer Bey and his supporters, despite the fact that Sefer Bey had reached an agreement with the Ankara government. Ethem came to the region without considering the decision made by the Ankara government and established the military tribunal himself as a precursor to hanging people. Internal tribal struggles among Circassians, i.e. between the Şapsığ and Ubıkh sub-groups, could also explain the disagreement between the two men. Indeed, there had been a long-standing struggle between Circassian tribes in the region, concerning who held sway over the other tribes and families. As a member of the Şapsığ, Ethem was welcomed by the mayor of the town Humetiko, Hüseyin Remzi Bey, who was also Şapsığ, and allowed Ethem to stay in his house while he was in Düzce. It could also be argued that

²⁹⁶ Ibid.726.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.727.

²⁹⁸ He was a grandson of Beslan Bey who was in exile in Greece with his father Aslan Bey, they stayed in Greece until the 1940s. Interview, 18 April 2015.

²⁹⁹ Kaşen is the name of a friendship between boys and girls among the Circassians. There are two types of kaşen: one is not serious and more akin to being friends; the other one is serious and leads to marriage.

³⁰⁰ Recep Albayrak, *Ethem Bey’in Sürgün Yılları ve Simav Olayları (1919-1948)* (Ankara: Berikan Yayınevi, 2004), 137.

some local leaders used Ethem to eliminate their regional rivals, as this would enable them to achieve or maintain dominance. Sefer Bey, on the other hand, belonged to one of the leading families of the Ubıkh sub-group. With the exception of one person, everyone around Sefer Bey was also Ubıkh. This situation led to tribal divisions between Circassians and the Şapsıĝ; Çerkes Ethem did not interrupt executions of Ubıkh.

Although the nationalists only regained control of the Adapazarı–Düzce region for a very limited time, they still took severe measures. Those who supported the incidents were condemned to death by the *Kuva-yi Milliye*, whereas other anti-nationalists escaped death by moving to Istanbul. The Istanbul government was planning to turn this situation around by mobilising anti-nationalists to join the newly established pro-Istanbul *Kuva-yi İnzibatiyye* force.³⁰¹ Approximately forty anti-nationalists had left the region and were seeking support from the Istanbul government.³⁰² The Istanbul government passed a law stipulating that compensation must be paid to those who suffered because of the nationalist attack in the Adapazarı region and were forced to leave the region.³⁰³ It was not only people from the Adapazarı–Düzce region who moved to Istanbul after the capture of the former by Ethem’s forces, but also those from the towns of Alaşehir and Salihli.³⁰⁴

To settle the chaos and prevent another incident, the nationalists tried to take further precautions in the region. Significant numbers of Circassians from the region joined Ethem’s forces.³⁰⁵ The commander of the Bolu region recruited approximately 1,000 Abkhazians to the gendarme forces. He also demanded a cavalry regiment from Ankara, arguing that it would not otherwise be possible to keep order in the region, as the

³⁰¹ BOA.BEO 4639/347908, 29 June 1336 (1920). *Kuva-yi İnzibatiyye* was prepared by Damad Ferid Paşa’s government against the nationalists.

³⁰² BOA.BEO 4646/348398, document 2. Some of these anti-nationalist people joined Circassian congress and had to leave Turkey later on; these included number 33 on the list, Maan Mustafa Bey of Adapazarı (‘Hain Mustafa’).

³⁰³ BOA.DH.KMS 59-1/50, document 6, 29 July 1336 (1920).

³⁰⁴ BOA.DH.KMS 59-1/50, document 10, 20 July 1336 (1920).

³⁰⁵ Gereade, *Hüsrev Gereade’nin Anıları*. 202.

loyalty of the population to the Sultanate meant that there was a risk of further uprising.³⁰⁶ The Ankara government did not consider the Abkhazians of the region to be trustworthy, and the Ministry of War warned the Ministry of Interior in Ankara that those Abkhazians who fought in the nationalist cause were expected to turn against Ankara.³⁰⁷ The case of Abkhazians was also discussed in the assembly, where Hüsrev (Gerede), who had been captured during the Düzce incident, explained the origins of the problem in Düzce. The Circassians and Abkhazians were the leading figures of the incident and, in his opinion, the Circassians would regret what had happened, whereas the Abkhazians, especially those from the Nüfren region³⁰⁸ (Halil Bey Village), lived as bandits, and did not fully accept the state's authority. They were particularly opposed to the constitutional monarchy, since their relationships with the Ottoman Palace – where their daughters lived in the Harem – had already broken down in the days following the declaration of the constitution in 1908. Furthermore, he suggested that the Ankara government should cleanse the region of armed bands, including armed Abkhazians.³⁰⁹

However, the measures taken in the region were not firmly established, and Düzce once again became a gathering place for anti-nationalists. The second incident began on 19 July 1920, when a group of people rose under the leadership of Maan Ali and occupied Düzce. Within a short period, their numbers had grown to 1,000,³¹⁰ but Colonel Nazım of the Ankara government was, nevertheless, able to suppress the incident.³¹¹ On 9 August 1920, another attempt to seize control of the local governor's offices took place in Bolu, this time by a group of about twenty Abkhazians. They based their actions on their belief

³⁰⁶ ATASE.İSH. 587/158, document no 158aa. 20 12 1336, 20 December 1920.

³⁰⁷ ATASE.İSH. 587/158, 20 12 1336 , 20 December 1920.

³⁰⁸ it is written as Neferin in the records mistakenly.

³⁰⁹ *Grand National Assembly, Open session 48, 14.81336 (1920)*, <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/TBMM/d01/c003/tbmm01003048.pdf>, accessed 14/11/2014, 215-216.

³¹⁰ Yetim, "Milli Mücadele Döneminde İsyanların Gölgesinde Düzce ve Çevresinde Asayiş Sorunları." 25.

³¹¹ Özkök, *Milli Mücadele Başlarken Düzce – Bolu İsyanları*. 269.

that the Circassian and Abkhazian men of the region would be killed by *Kuva-yı Milliye* and their daughters and wives would be made into concubines.³¹² This incident was also not successful for them, and was suppressed by the nationalists on 18 August.³¹³ To strengthen its rule in the region, the Ankara government declared an amnesty on 30 August 1920. However, some people were excluded from the amnesty. These included: Hacı Akmil and Maan Ali Bey of Düzce; Gürcü Süleyman Efendi of Hendek; Talo Sinan Bey, Çır Çır Bey, Kamil, Akçalı Hüseyin Çavuş and his brother Beslen of Akyazı; and Şirin Hazbuk Ahmet and Mustafa of Kayalar village. Furthermore, the governor of Bolu, a man named Osman, İzmit governor İbrahim Hakkı, along with Ahmed Anzavur and Captain Mehmet Hulusi, were all wanted dead or alive and their properties were confiscated.³¹⁴ Nevertheless, the anti-nationalist movement continued and, in the summer of 1921, hundreds of deserters from the surrounding area came to Düzce. The deserters consisted not only of Circassians and Abkhazians, but also of other Muslims who had moved to Düzce.³¹⁵ For this reason, Ankara paid close attention to the Düzce region. The names of those who had launched the incident and had not been punished by Ankara were published in a list, and the villages of Abaza Aktepe, Çerkes Elmacık, Çerkesköprübaşı, Çiftlik, Cedidiyye, Çıpyak, Arapçiftliği, Büyükaçma, Dereliköy, Süleyman Bey were named as having played a role in the incident.³¹⁶ Even at the end of December 1921, complaints against Circassians in Düzce and Adapazarı were still being made. For example, 300 Circassian cavalry soldiers created disorder and disturbed the military divisions of the Ankara government in the region.³¹⁷

³¹² Yetim, “Milli Mücadele Döneminde İsyanların Gölgesinde Düzce ve Çevresinde Asayiş Sorunları.”25.

³¹³ Özkök, *Milli Mücadele Başlarken Düzce – Bolu İsyanları*, 270 – 276. Yetim, “Milli Mücadele Döneminde İsyanların Gölgesinde Düzce ve Çevresinde Asayiş Sorunları.” 26.

³¹⁴ Kazım Aras, *İstiklal Savaşında Kocaeli Bölgesindeki Harekat*, (İstanbul 1936), 21 quoted in Özkök, *Milli Mücadele Başlarken Düzce – Bolu İsyanları*, 314-316.

³¹⁵ Military reports emphasize this movement see ATASE.İSH.1139/105, document no from 105 to 105af, July and August 1921.

³¹⁶ ATASE.İSH. 950/98, 1337 (1921).

³¹⁷ ATASE.İSH.1311/53, document no 53, 53a, 20 10 1337(1921). There were some suspicious on the Circassians who fight for the nationalists in some units ATASE.İSH.1240/52, document no 52. 12/8/1337 (1920).

In the days following the Adapazarı–Düzce incidents of October 1920, another incident took place in the Central Black Sea region of Sinop. A group of Circassians, which included ex-military officer Çerkes Kazım and a few of his friends from the town of Alaçam and the village of Karlı, became involved in banditry and joined a local group called ‘*Bayram Çetesi*’. The local governor then attempted to cleanse (‘*tathir*’, ‘*temizlemek*’) all Circassians from the region, regardless of whether or not they were bandits.³¹⁸ However, this was not permitted by Canik Governorships’ *Mutasarrıflık*, who warned the local gendarme and armed forces that they should try to catch the members of armed bands, instead of removing all local Circassians from the region.³¹⁹ At the end of the pursuit, Bayram and Çerkes Kazım were killed by gendarme forces (8 November 1920), who regained control of the area.³²⁰

3 - The Yozgat Incident

Immediately after the Adapazarı–Düzce incidents, Ankara needed Ethem to suppress another anti-nationalist movement to the east of Ankara, in Yozgat. A local notable family, the Çapanoğlu family, rejected the nationalists’ demand that they send representatives to the assembly in Ankara on behalf of the people of Yozgat.³²¹ To the Çapanoğlu brothers, the idea of sending representatives to the assembly was akin to rebelling against both the Sultanate and the Ottoman government. Thus, they informed the nationalists that no representatives from Yozgat would be sent to the assembly.³²² At first, the general military staff issued an appeal to bring the Çapanoğlu brothers to Ankara. However, the Vice Governor of Ankara, Yahya Galip helped them to avoid coming to Ankara to stand trial because a member of the family, Celal (who was also the local

³¹⁸ ATASE.İSH. 967/ 54. 2 Teşrinievvel (October), 1336 (1920), from local governor of Bafra to Canik mutasarrıfı. ATASE.İSH. 967/54. Document no 54ae, 10/11/1336 (1920).

³¹⁹ ATASE.İSH.967/54, document no 54aa, 1 Teşrinisani (November) 1337 (1920).

³²⁰ ATASE.İSH. 967/ 54, document 54ae, 10/11/1336 (1920).

³²¹ Akşin, *İç Savaş ve Sevr’de Ölüm*. 67.

³²² Ibid.67.

governor of Tokat), had assisted Yahya Galip when he was exile in Tokat during the time of the Abdülhamid II.³²³

Tensions between the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) and the Liberal Entente further affected the emergence of the uprising. Edip Bey (1859 – 1925), an influential member of the Çapanoğlu family, was once a supporter of the CUP and an MP for the party.³²⁴ In the Ottoman Assembly of the post-1908 period, he had slowly become an opponent of the CUP because he did not agree with some of their policies, and his criticisms eventually led to his expulsion from the CUP. He was not even allowed to return to the governorship, and was forced to leave the capital and return to his hometown on 5 January 1911.³²⁵ Later on, he joined the Liberal Entente. The loyalist–nationalist differentiation in that region was not especially motivated by ideology or religion, but rather depended on individuals’ personal and past political experiences. Thus, Edip Bey was against the nationalists due to the lack of authority in the region, war-weariness, and the fact that he was an anti-CUP activist. The nationalists, for their part, seemed to view this as part of a CUP project.³²⁶

At first, there were two incidents in Yozgat. One of these was between the Yıldızeli and Akdağmadeni regions, and was led by ‘Postacı Nazım’ or Nazım the Postman, and the other was between the areas of Zile and Çekerek, and was led by Aynacıoğulları.³²⁷ These incidents were not initially related to each other, but later became widespread due to the persistent lack of authority in the region. In the early days, the Çapanoğlu family did not participate in the incident, but the developing situation later encouraged two Çapanoğlus, Celal and Salih Beys, to compete against the nationalists.³²⁸

³²³ Ibid. 88-89.

³²⁴ Abdülkadir Bey, *Çapanoğulları Hadisesi ve Abdülkadir Bey’in Hatıraları*, ed. Ali Şakir Ergin (Ankara: Ahmet Şevki Ergin Kültür ve Hizmet Vakfı Yayınları, 2006), 162.

³²⁵ Ibid. 165.

³²⁶ Ibid. 38.

³²⁷ Ibid. 25.

³²⁸ Ibid. 41.

One of these issues transpired when the mufti of Yozgat and the Çapanoğlu family disagreed about the collection of money for the nationalists. The mufti informed Ankara that the family was against collecting money for the nationalist cause, and Kılıç Ali Bey was sent by Ankara to Yozgat to seize control of the region and to organise fundraising for the *Kuva-yi Milliye*. He came to Yozgat on 1 June 1920, and kept the Çapanoğlu family under close surveillance. Members of the family, including Celal, Edip, Salih, and their brother in law, Mahmut (along with his sons Mekki, Şekib and Muhlis), were very disturbed by Kılıç Ali's policies. In response, they left the city and began to collaborate with the anti-nationalists (8 June 1920).³²⁹ A week later, they returned to the city in order to begin the uprising (14 June). Their first move was to release prisoners from the town prison.³³⁰

On this issue, it has been noted that Süleyman Sırrı once mentioned, in a secret session of the assembly, that Çapanoğlu Memet Ağa had been assigned by the Sultan to fight against the Ankara government; he had been given a force of 1,500 men for this purpose.³³¹ Indeed, the incident spread very quickly. Once again, Ankara did not have enough military power to gain complete control of the situation. When the family achieved full control of Yozgat on 14 (or 13) June, Ethem – who had just suppressed the incident in Düzce – was called by İsmet (İnönü) to overthrow the Çapanoğlus.³³² Ethem was welcomed by all the high-ranking politicians and military men at Ankara train station. A celebration in his honour was organised by Mustafa Kemal in the streets of Ankara, where he was declared the saviour of the people, or 'Münci Millet', in the assembly. In spite of this warm welcome, Ethem was not pleased to be in Ankara. He would rather

³²⁹ Ibid. 43, footnote 7. According to another story they left the city because they would be exiled to Ankara due to their ties to the Zile incident in May 1920. Ibid. 46-47.

³³⁰ Ibid. 52 – 53.

³³¹ *Grand National Assembly, Secret session* 26, 3 July 1336 (1920), <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/GZC/d01/CILT01/gcz01001026.pdf> accessed 14/11/2014, 63.

³³² Akşin, *İç Savaş ve Sevr'de Ölüm*. 88-89.

have been in Salihli, so that he could administer the front and prepare for a potential Greek attack.³³³ In the special meeting between him, Mustafa Kemal, İsmet (İnönü) and Fevzi (Çakmak), Ethem criticised the Ankara government and its leaders for not being able to quell an incident that took place next to their city. Furthermore, he accused them of not working hard enough to form a military unit and of sending manifestos to Anatolia, Istanbul, and the Allied powers instead.³³⁴ During this meeting, the rhetoric that Ethem used against the leaders of the Ankara government was unexpected and harsh. Mustafa Kemal, on the other hand, complained about disagreements in the assembly, believing that these disagreements stemmed from the fact that many people from different backgrounds were present, most of whom were emotionally connected to the Caliphate. Hence, it was difficult to pass laws and take the necessary measures in the assembly to control the region.³³⁵

On 20 June, Ethem moved from Ankara to Yozgat. On 23 June, he arrived in Yozgat and took control of the city on behalf of the nationalist forces on that same day.³³⁶ After his attack on the Çapanoğlus, some of the leaders of that family left the battleground and escaped to the Aziziye (Pınarbaşı) region of Kayseri, a region that was mostly settled by Circassians. Other members of the family, namely Halid and Mehmed Celaledin Bey, were also sheltered by Circassians.³³⁷ The governor and inspector of Yozgat were imprisoned. Ethem established a military court, which hanged twelve people, and hanged the Kadı of the town (the judge in the Islamic court).³³⁸ Çapanoğlu Mahmut Bey, Çapanoğlu Vasıf Bey, Ceritzade Hüsnü Efendi, Kadı Remzi Efendi, Tevfikzade Ahmed

³³³ Indeed, the Greek forces attacked the western front a week later on June 22nd. In the secret session of July 3/ 1920 İsmet stated that the Greeks begun military action in Izmir in June 22 1920 *Grand National Assembly, Secret session 26, 3 July 1336 (1920)*, <http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/GZC/d01/CILT01/gcz01001026.pdf>, accessed 14/11/2014, 52. Sina Akşin claims that the attack was in June 21/ 1920 see Akşin, *İç Savaş ve Sevr'de Ölüm*, 88-89.

³³⁴ Çerkes Ethem, *Anılarım*. 47.

³³⁵ Ibid.48.

³³⁶ Akşin, *İç Savaş ve Sevr'de Ölüm*. 90.

³³⁷ Ergin, *Çapanoğulları Hadisesi ve Abdulkadir Bey'in Hatıraları*, 160 – 170.

³³⁸ Akşin, *İç Savaş ve Sevr'de Ölüm*.90.

Efendi, Hafız Şahab, his son Refet Efendi, and Veysel (from the Tatar İmam village), were all hanged due to their participation in the incident; the other four people who were hanged were from Ethem's own forces, and were executed for looting during the suppression of the incident.³³⁹ However, the families of those who took part in the incident could not be arrested; instead, they were sent to Ankara by Ethem. The houses and properties of those captured by Ethem were demolished. Lastly, those who could not be arrested were made to join to nationalist forces. If they did so, their lives would be protected.³⁴⁰

Ethem let his people burn the Çapanoğlu family houses and farms.³⁴¹ On 24 June, he went to the town of Alaca. A Circassian village on the periphery of the town, by the name of Altıntaş, was surrounded by his forces. Ethem chose to carry out a raid on this village because its residents had fought against the *Kuva-yi Milliye* when they came to the region. Since the nationalists lost a significant number of men in that fight, Ethem wanted to punish the villagers. Therefore, 23 people were executed by firing squad.³⁴² It can be said that, although Ethem had a significant number of Circassians within his forces, he had zero tolerance for Circassians who fought against nationalists. His brutality did not distinguish between Circassian and non-Circassian enemies, as he had already shown during the Adapazarı–Düzce and Anzavur incidents.

In the post-WWI order, there was chaos in the Yozgat region, just as there was in the Adapazarı–Düzce region, and in South Marmara in general, with killings and hangings becoming part of daily life. The governor of Yozgat, also known as 'The Crazy Kurdish Governor' (Kürt Deli Vali), announced that anyone who brought the head of a notorious local bandit called 'Circassian İlyas the Murderer' (Katil Çerkes İlyas) from the

³³⁹ Ergin, *Çapanoğulları Hadisesi ve Abdulkadir Bey'in Hatıraları*, 106, footnote 33. Zübeyir Uzun, "Milli Mücadele'de Çerkez Ethem ve Kuva-yı Seyyare'nin Faaliyetleri (1919–1920)" (Master Thesis, Selçuk University, 2008), 69.

³⁴⁰ Ergin, *Çapanoğulları Hadisesi ve Abdulkadir Bey'in Hatıraları*, 107.

³⁴¹ Ibid. 61.

³⁴² Ibid. 76.

village of Arpalık of Sarıkaya to the town of Yozgat would be pardoned by the state, regardless of what crimes he might previously have committed. Another bandit from the region, Ebellioğlu Musa, along with his men and Battal ‘the Black’ (‘Kara Battal’), pursued İlyas, and then ambushed, killed, and beheaded him. His head was sent to the governor, but when the Circassians heard the news of his death, they exacted revenge by killing Battal and his mother.³⁴³

In the region, the horrific consequences of violence were very noticeable. With control of the region now in the hands of the nationalists, violence was not prevented; executions were merely carried out in the name of the ‘law’. Following the suppression of the incident, an independent court was established by Ankara, and this court hanged 25 people. The court usually tried people on one day and executed them the next day.³⁴⁴ A number of people were also executed by shooting, without any judicial process having taken place. A leader of a local Circassian band, Rifat ‘*Düzceli Rifat*’, and twelve of his men were exiled to Ankara because they took part in the incident. They would be tried in court or kept under surveillance in Ankara. However, on the way to Ankara, they were executed by nationalists.³⁴⁵ Only Rifat and one of his men escaped the execution.

Still evading capture by the nationalists, Çapanoğlu Edip Bey decided to find a way of meeting with the Sultan in Istanbul, from where he could bring arms, artillery, and military forces to fight against the *Kuva-yi Milliye*. He thought that, if he reached the port of Samsun on the Black Sea, he could make it to Istanbul. Along with Abdülkadir Bey and some of his men, Edip Bey moved from the town of Akdağmadeni in Yozgat to Samsun. Çerkes Kara Yusuf was their guide (*mihmandar*).³⁴⁶ This region contained a high number of Circassian villages and settlements, which they used to overcome

³⁴³ ‘Yozgat İsyanı’ Ömer Faik Boran, 58. Quoted in Ergin, *Çapanoğulları Hadisesi ve Abdulkadir Bey'in Hatıralar*, 211. Ali Şakir Ergin gave some part of this work in his book.

³⁴⁴ Ibid. 205.

³⁴⁵ Ibid. 120-123.

³⁴⁶ Ibid. 81-94.

difficulties that they faced during their journey, as the Circassian villagers and fighters provided them with food, horses, and accommodation. They travelled to Merzifon via Çorum, Tokat, and Amasya. However, when they reached Merzifon, they had to go back to Yozgat. Samsun proved to be an unsafe place for them because the nationalist forces had already taken control of the city.³⁴⁷ The party left using the same route that they had followed to get to Yozgat. A few days after their arrival in Yozgat, Edip Bey was arrested by local military forces of the Ankara government, and was exiled to Ankara, where he was to be kept under surveillance. In Ankara, he was not imprisoned, and was only required to attend the police station twice daily in order to show himself to officials.³⁴⁸

In Yozgat, the local power struggle was won by the Ankara government. However, the Çapanoğlu incident increased the friction between Ethem and Mustafa Kemal. An investigation by the military court held the governor (*mutasarrıf*) of Yozgat, who also had good relations with Yahya Galip Bey (the governor of Ankara, who had close ties to Mustafa Kemal at the time) responsible for not quelling the incident. Ethem sent a telegram to Ankara, in which he requested that Yahya Galip be called before the military court. However, his demand was rejected by Ankara on the grounds that Yahya Galib was too sick to make the journey to Yozgat.³⁴⁹ One reason why this demand was rejected might have been the fact that Yahya Galib had not sacked the governor of Yozgat before the incident. Mustafa Kemal might have thought that, if Yahya Galib were to be tried by the military court because of his bad governance, he himself could be called to appear before the very same court.³⁵⁰ Mustafa Kemal, as head of the assembly, bore some responsibility for Yahya Galib's mistakes. He may possibly have thought that, if he gave Ethem the opportunity to try Yahya Galib, Ethem would attempt to try him as well. Moreover, Ethem explains in his memoir that Mustafa Kemal's failure to remove Yahya

³⁴⁷ Ibid. 81-94.

³⁴⁸ Ibid. 125.

³⁴⁹ Çerkes Ethem, *Anılarım*. 62 – 63.

³⁵⁰ Ibid. 63.

Galip was a mistake, despite the mistakes made by the latter during his time as governor of the region.³⁵¹ Mustafa Kemal did not allow the military court to try Yahya Galib, and the incident turned into power struggle between him and Ethem. This incident was the second issue to develop between Mustafa Kemal and Ethem, and was the beginning of a crisis of authority in the national movement.

Although the civil war continued after these incidents, the most important incidents, namely the Anzavur, the Adapazarı–Düzce and Yozgat, had all been suppressed by Ethem.³⁵² In the eastern part of Anatolia, Kazım Karabekir waged war on Armenian forces. During this period, however, the western and central parts of the Anatolian movement were somewhat weak against Greek forces and the anti-nationalist uprisings. In the absence of regular troops, irregular troops were vital. Having a larger irregular force allowed Ethem to succeed in suppressing the three most important incidents early on, which proved vital for the establishment of the Ankara government in this part of the state.³⁵³

Conclusion

The Adapazarı–Düzce region was one of the important places for the anti-nationalist movement during the 1920s. Traditionally, the people of this region were loyal to the Ottoman Sultan. The Circassians were the predominant group of the region and, to them, the Ankara government and the *Kuva-yı Milliye* appeared to be the continuation of the CUP, which they held solely accountable for the disastrous outcomes of the wars over the past decade. The existence of the anti-nationalist movement in the Adapazarı–Düzce region deepened the impact of the civil war between the Istanbul and Ankara governments. In addition to the Adapazarı–Düzce incidents, the Çapanoğlu incident was

³⁵¹ Ibid. 66.

³⁵² Akşin, *İç Savaş ve Sevr'de Ölüm*. 90.

³⁵³ Ibid. 90.

also another significant problem for the Ankara government, which lacked the military power needed to overcome the disorder and defeat the anti-nationalists at that time. Çerkes Ethem was called on by Ankara to protect the nationalist cause and prevent its demise at a time when it was just emerging.

Chapter Four: Replacement of the Bandits and Irregular Forces with the Regular Army in the Western Front, Çerkes Ethem, Mustafa Kemal and İsmet (İnönü)

Introduction

Why is the so-called ‘Çerkes Ethem incident’ still considered an important subject in Turkish historiography 90 years later? As can be seen from the images uploaded on the Turkish General Staff (TGS)’ web page on 26 February 2013,³⁵⁴ Ethem was welcomed at the Ankara train station by Mustafa Kemal himself in May 1920. In a previous version of the image, Ethem and some his soldiers’ faces had been blurred.³⁵⁵ Within a few days of the uploading of the picture on the TGS web page, a group of Circassians in Turkey reacted to the blurring of the image on social media by protesting (via Twitter). TGS then changed the image to the original version, which was clearer, placating the Circassian community. It is difficult to say that the release of the blurred picture was the result of an institutional policy at the TGS. The uploading of the image was a decision made by an officer or a sub-department, since if the TGS did have an institutional-wide policy concerning the Çerkes Ethem incident it would not have been possible for the author to conduct research in the TGS military archives over the last few years. During this time, no restrictions were imposed on access to the archives, and every document in the catalogues relating to Çerkes Ethem was made available. Moreover, the head of the archive, a brigadier general, contacted the researcher on several occasions to ask if anything else was required. During the period of the research, every single document requested was uploaded to the author’s account. This compares favourably with the military archives policies towards researchers ten years ago. The working conditions at the archive for researchers today are more flexible. However, some officials within the TGS have yet to adjust to this policy, as evidenced by the aforementioned issue

³⁵⁴ http://uyg.tsk.tr/ataturk/ata_album/albuyuk/index.htm. image 25.

³⁵⁵ <http://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/823156-genelkurmay-cerkez-etheme-sansur-mu-uyguladi>.

concerning the blurred picture uploaded onto the TGS web page. It is possible the TGS has an ambivalent policy: on the one hand, it wants to open the archives to everyone; on the other, it still maintains certain ideological barriers regarding particular topics, affecting some sub-departments and individuals within the TGS.



The blurred version of the picture uploaded to the TGS web). After the reactions on the social media, TGS uploaded the original picture to the web page.



The original picture. Ankara May 1920. Çerkes Ethem and his armed men were welcomed by Mustafa Kemal at the train station. He was subsequently welcomed in the assembly as the 'hero of the people' (*Münci Millet*).

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Ethem suppressed the three important anti-nationalist incidents threatening the government based in Ankara, as all large-scale domestic threats targeted it. Mustafa Kemal then aimed to take control of the entire assembly and the western front. The regular army was being prepared by Ankara, and the war against Armenian forces in the eastern front was ending. In view of this situation, the

relationship between Ethem and Mustafa Kemal began to change. Mustafa Kemal, as the head of the assembly and fast becoming an unrivalled leader of the Anatolian movement, had gradually increased his power with regard to military and political issues.

Aside from the danger from Ethem and Enver Paşa (the latter was seeking a way to return to Anatolia), there was no significant threat to Mustafa Kemal's ambitions. Mustafa Kemal initially aimed to control and use Ethem, although he quickly learned this was no easy task. He concluded at the end of December 1920 that the best option was to exclude him from the Anatolian movement altogether. This chapter argues that there were several reasons why Çerkes Ethem and Mustafa Kemal's relationships had deteriorated, resulting in Çerkes Ethem's exclusion from the national movement. One reason was the increasing significance of Ethem's military victories on the western front and the political impact this was having in the assembly, particularly after he successfully suppressed the incidents. Although, as a military man, Ethem did not have political ambitions, he was fast becoming one of the most influential people among the political circles of the time. Due to the absence and imprisonment of a large number of prominent CUP³⁵⁶ members by the British, Ethem's military success against the anti-nationalist groups heightened his importance to the political opponents of Mustafa Kemal in the assembly. Although Mustafa Kemal had influence over the members of assembly, he frequently encountered significant opposition to some of his decisions among members.³⁵⁷ Ethem was surrounded by the opponents of Mustafa Kemal, some of whom were careerists, while others were looking for an opportunity to strengthen their own positions against him. They attempted to use Ethem to solidify their movement and to balance Mustafa Kemal's influence. However, this attempt, along with Mustafa Kemal's intolerant approach to anyone who

³⁵⁶ Committee of Union and Progress. An Ottoman political party was in power from 1913 to 1918. The leaders of the party escaped from Ottoman Empire after the World War one was lost to save their lives during the occupation of Anatolian by the Allies.

³⁵⁷ Later on these MPs established second group in the assembly. See Ahmet Demirel, *Birinci Meclis'te Muhalefet : İkinci Grup* ; (İstanbul : İletişim, 2009). Ahmet Demirel, *Birinci Meclis'te Mustafa Kemal'in Muhallifleri* / (İstanbul : Ufuk yayınları, 2013).

opposed his own authority, and Tevfik's (Ethem's brother) uncompromising stance toward the regular army led to open conflict between the two sides and the exclusion of Ethem and his brothers from the nationalist core. Indeed, the mismanagement of the crisis between the irregular troops under Ethem and Tevfik, and the regular troops under İsmet and Refet Beys was an important reason for this. This chapter will first examine the reasons for the struggle between Mustafa Kemal and Enver Paşa in relation to its impact on the general policy of the Ankara government for the North Caucasus, and that towards Çerkes Ethem. Secondly, it will study Green Army Society, an organisation that gradually became an obstacle for Mustafa Kemal, and the impact this had on the exclusion process aimed at Çerkes Ethem by the national movement. Thirdly, this chapter will demonstrate how the regular-irregular army debate on the western front led to the elimination of Ethem from the national movement.

1 - Çerkes Ethem, Enver – Mustafa Kemal struggle and Bolsheviks

Following the Mudros Armistice, executive members of the CUP, including Talat, Enver and Cemal Paşas, left the empire for Germany to avoid court cases relating to their activities. The CUP leaders had already anticipated the Allied occupation of Anatolia, and had taken precautions before WWI ended. Indeed, they had arms and money hoarded in Anatolia. Enver Paşa also planned to go to the Eastern Black Sea coast of Sochi in the North West Caucasus, to pass towards Baku where the Ottoman army was strong, to take the region under his control and build up resistance against the Allies, particularly the British. Although the foremost leaders of the CUP left the empire, its mid-ranking members such as local governors, captains in the army and high-ranking military men, were all seeking out ways to preserve the empire from occupation.³⁵⁸ The CUP and the

³⁵⁸ Emel Akal, *Mustafa Kemal, İttihat Terakki ve Bolşevizm Milli Mücadelenin Başlangıcında* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2012), 122.

Special Organisation were the most highly organised structures in the empire at the time and therefore best placed to establish a resistance movement in Anatolia. Without their participation, resistance was not possible in the empire. The resistance movement was organised top-down³⁵⁹ and the CUP used its organisational capabilities and military-bureaucracy to mobilise the first non-regular armed groups in the empire, such as Çerkes Ethem (who was persuaded by another Circassian, Rauf (Orbay), to create a resistance group around Salihli against Greek forces).³⁶⁰

Enver Paşa was a military general with experience fighting guerrilla wars against Bulgarian and Macedonian bandits, during the Balkan Wars of 1912-13, but also in Libya, and WWI. Irregular armed groups from the national movement were close to Enver Paşa because of their united struggle against enemy troops during the wars of the previous ten years, and all had broad experience of guerrilla warfare.³⁶¹ He formed a loyal group in the Special Organisation from those who were closest to him; even the members of the Organisation, as will be assessed below, backed him, although they fought for Ankara at the beginning of the resistance movement. Enver was an enthusiastic leader. After his arrival in Berlin from Istanbul in the winter of 1919, his objective was to go to Moscow to meet with the Bolsheviks. He was involved in six plane accidents during the attempted flight to Moscow; finally arriving in Moscow in August 1920.³⁶²

The CUP leadership were still viewed as significant figures in the Muslim world by the Russians; particularly Enver Paşa, who was also known as ‘Seyfullah’ by other Muslims (the ‘sword of Islam’). To have the support of the CUP leaders was significant for the Bolsheviks, since they sought to influence the broader Muslim World. The reason

³⁵⁹ Akal, *Mustafa Kemal, İttihat Terakki ve Bolşevizm Milli Mücadelenin Başlangıcında*, 14.

³⁶⁰ Ethem was member of the special organisation, and his family had link with the executive members of the CUP His father Ali Bey was the founder of the İzmir Branch of the CUP.

³⁶¹ Akal, *Mustafa Kemal, İttihat Terakki ve Bolşevizm Milli Mücadelenin Başlangıcında*, 44.

³⁶² Masayuki Yamauchi, *The Green Crescent under the Red Star: Enver Pasha in Soviet Russia 1919-1922*, Studia Culturae Islamicae ; (Tokyo : Institute for the study of languages and cultures of Asia and Africa, 1991), 25.

for this policy was that the majority of countries populated with Muslims, such as India, Afghanistan, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco and Libya were under colonial European rule (particularly British). Bolshevism, as an alternative ideology to capitalism, required the support of the ‘oppressed’ people of the world against the European powers. Although the Ottoman Empire had lost the war to the Allies, its leaders remained influential. The Bolsheviks were aiming to take advantage of this influence to use it against the Allies.

The Bolsheviks were also seen as important allies by the Ankara government. However, Ankara was not seen as a legitimate representative of Turkey by the Bolsheviks from the outset. The Bolsheviks did not take Ankara seriously, due to civil war and disorder in Anatolia. To change the situation with the Bolsheviks, Ankara took steps to forge closer relations with them. A delegation was sent by Ankara to visit them consisting of Bekir Sami (Kunduh) (Chairman), Yusuf Kemal (Tengirşenk), İbrahim Tali (Öngören), Osman Bey of Lazistan (MP) and Seyfi (Düzgören) Bey.³⁶³ They reached Moscow train station on 19 July 1920 after an almost two month long journey. The representatives of the Ankara government were not welcomed according to the necessary diplomatic protocols in Russia; none of the members of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs were waiting for them at the station in Moscow. Indeed, the representatives waited about an hour at the station before being taken to a place near to the Kremlin Palace.³⁶⁴ They then struggled to arrange meetings with their counterparts in Moscow over the following days. The Bolsheviks still considered meeting with the CUP leaders, namely the Paşas Talat, Cemal and particularly Enver, who had escaped to Berlin but who retained had a reputation in Bolshevik circles.³⁶⁵ Indeed, these Paşas had met with

³⁶³ Ali Fuat Cebesoy, *Moskova Hatıraları : (21/11/1920-2/6/1922) /* (İstanbul : Vatan Neşriyatı, 1955), 61.

³⁶⁴ *Grand National Assembly, Secret session* 84, 16.10.1336 (1920), <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/GZC/d01/CILT01/gcz01001084.pdf>, 159. accessed 14/11/2014.

³⁶⁵ Akal, *Mustafa Kemal, İttihat Terakki ve Bolşevizm Milli Mücadelenin Başlangıcında*, 92.

Trotsky, Lenin, Chicherin, and Stalin (the leaders of the Bolshevik movement).³⁶⁶ Enver Paşa did however facilitate affairs, ensuring the representatives of the Ankara government were granted an official meeting with the Bolshevik leaders.

Enver Paşa's policy in this case is worth examining, to understand the differences between the two differing wings of the nationalists; one was represented by him and the other by Mustafa Kemal. While his aim was to form an Islamic resistance by gaining Bolshevik-Russian support against British imperialism in Ottoman territories, Afghanistan, Iran and the Muslim World, Mustafa Kemal's, the only concern was for the Anatolian part of the remaining Ottoman territory. For his part, Enver Paşa thought that to succeed in his ambitions he would have to develop Islamic socialism.³⁶⁷ He also expected that he would have to convince the Russians to bestow financial and military support to spread the idea of Islamic socialism in the region. It emerges that Enver Paşa attempted to demonstrate to the Russians just how close his views were to socialism when compared with those of Mustafa Kemal.³⁶⁸

Enver Paşa published a piece of work called '*Mesai*' to map out the ideology and to strengthen his followers' positions inside the assembly in Ankara. Although the *Mesai* was inspired by Marxism, it is best described as a blending of socialist, corporatist, Islamic and nationalist ideas.³⁶⁹ On the other hand, Akal claims that the CUP leaders supported Bolshevism for reasons that were more pragmatic, and that their aim was not to create a Bolshevik-inspired state in Anatolia. However, it must be noted that Bolshevik terminology was spreading among the bureaucrats and the military in Anatolia, following the Bolshevik revolution. Despite the fact that there was limited network and communication among people at the time, due to the uncensored and moderate number of Bolshevik-inspired newspapers, such ideas did permeate in Anatolia. Açıksöz

³⁶⁶ Ibid. 92.

³⁶⁷ Yamauchi, *The Green Crescent under the Red Star*. 19.

³⁶⁸ Ibid. 37.

³⁶⁹ Ibid. 34.

(Kastamonu), Albayrak (Erzurum), İstikbal (Trabzon), Öğüt (Afyon and Konya), Yeni Adana (Adana) were some of the Bolshevik oriented newspapers in Anatolia. What made the newspapers sympathetic to Bolshevik ideas was their shared enemy: namely, the western capitalists. Although the reasons behind support for the Bolsheviks were pragmatic, a large number of articles were published in these newspapers favouring the Bolshevik ideology.³⁷⁰

Enver was relatively ambitious in his agenda and the Russians saw him as an important player, a force necessary to balance Mustafa Kemal, rather than an alternative to him. Enver had already left the empire in October 1918. Due to Mustafa Kemal's opposition to his return to Anatolia, he could not find any place in the new military or the political structures of the post-WWI period. The eastern front commander of the Ankara government, Kazım Karabekir, had already been warned not to allow Enver to pass onto the Turkish side of the border.³⁷¹ One reason for Bolshevik support for Enver Paşa was that they could create a division between the CUP leaders and the leaders of the Anatolian movement to gain benefits from this division and to expand their ideology further in Anatolia.³⁷² Enver Paşa was already working on plans to bring together areas that had been Ottoman pre-WWI under a new Ottoman confederation. He also planned to go to Anatolia in the spring of 1921 with numerous military divisions, provided by the Russians, under his command.³⁷³ In a letter he sent to Halil Paşa in November 1920, he underlines that if the Russians would give him military troops consisting of Muslims, he would be willing to go to Anatolia to fight against the Greeks. He also emphasised that Şükrü (Yenibahçeli), Eşref (Kuşçubaşı), Nail (Yenibahçeli) should create a group for him in Anatolia.³⁷⁴ Enver Paşa also used one of his closest allies, Hacı Sami (Kuşçubaşı), to

³⁷⁰ Akal, *Mustafa Kemal, İttihat Terakki ve Bolşevizm Milli Mücadelenin Başlangıcında*, 106 – 115.

³⁷¹ Kâzım Karabekir, *İstiklâl Harbimizde Enver Paşa ve İttihat Terakki Erkânı* (İstanbul : Menteş Matbaası, 1967), 132-137.

³⁷² Cebesoy, *Moskova Hatıraları*, 159.

³⁷³ Ibid.163.

³⁷⁴ Ibid. 163-164.

create the group.³⁷⁵ He wrote to the centre of Islamic Unity in Istanbul, which was under his control, that they should also have contact with the Circassian brothers (Ethem and Reşit), who were free of suspicion and loyal to him.³⁷⁶

Enver Paşa was also effective at mobilising bureaucrats, bringing politicians and paramilitary leaders to his side. The existing historiography does not direct attention towards his impact on the Anatolian resistance movement. Although he was mostly in Berlin and Moscow during the period 1919-1921, he remained influential within the movement. Indeed, several of his closest allies were positioned in eastern and western Anatolia. In the east, Trabzon proved an important centre for Enverists,³⁷⁷ the most prominent being Halil Paşa, Küçük Talat, Yenibahçeli Nail, Naim Cevat, Kazım Bey (Enver's brother in law), Seyfi, Ali Rıza and Yahya Kaptan.³⁷⁸ The city afforded both sea and overland access to Russia through the Caucasus. Enverists used this opportunity not only to meet with Enver and Russian authorities but also to contact executive members of the North Caucasian Republic; something that would become one of the main differences between Enver and Mustafa Kemal in terms of their policy towards those in Bolshevik Russia and the North Caucasus. In the assembly, there were already 40 MPs close to Enver Paşa.³⁷⁹ He also had a close relationship with the left wing opposition in Anatolia, and his influence over people disturbed Mustafa Kemal,³⁸⁰ since he did not want to share his authority over the movement with Enver Paşa. Ethem, Reşit, and Eşref (the paramilitary group leaders) were also closer to Enver Paşa than Mustafa Kemal. They helped him to climb the career ladder in the army, and later to become Commander in

³⁷⁵ Ibid. 171-172.

³⁷⁶ Murat Bardakçı, *Enver* / (İstanbul : İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2015), 279-280.

³⁷⁷ I use 'Enverists' as the supporters of Enver Paşa.

³⁷⁸ Akal, *Mustafa Kemal, İttihat Terakki ve Bolşevizm Milli Mücadelenin Başlangıcında*, 255-256.

³⁷⁹ Cebesoy, *Moskova Hatıraları*, 314.

³⁸⁰ Erik Jan Zürcher, *The Unionist Factor : The Role of the Committee of Union and Progress in the Turkish National Movement, 1905-1926* / (Leiden : Brill, 1984), 123.

Chief.³⁸¹ Moreover, it seems that one of the reasons for the conflict between Ethem and Mustafa Kemal was the relatively close relationship between Ethem and Enver Paşa.³⁸²

Enver Paşa and Dr Nazım made an agreement with Ali Fuat Paşa (representative of the Ankara government in the Turkish Embassy of Moscow). According to their agreement, Enver Paşa would not involve himself in the domestic problems of Anatolia. He would work outside Anatolia for Islamic Unity, and together with the Russian Communists would battle the imperialists. However, they would not accept communism as their ideology, and would never work against Turkey's interest.³⁸³ In July 1921, however, Greek troops moved towards Ankara to put an end to the national movement by occupying its headquarters. They took Kütahya and Eskişehir, and came to Polatlı, just 50kms away from Ankara. It was here, that Enver Paşa sent a letter to Mustafa Kemal blaming him for behaving like a dictator and for preventing him from coming to Anatolia. Enver wrote that when the time came he would move to Anatolia without considering Mustafa Kemal's thoughts, and that that if he were in Anatolia, there would be no conflict and division among the nationalists as was already happening and could be seen with the Çerkes Ethem incident.³⁸⁴ Enver met with Soviet Foreign Policy Commissar Chicherin in Moscow on 28 July 1921,³⁸⁵ later moving to Batum where he met with his own inner circle consisting of Halil (Kut) Paşa, Küçük Talat, Dr. Nazım and Hacı Sami (Kuşçubaşı) to discuss the actions they would take.³⁸⁶ If the Ankara government under Mustafa Kemal's leadership did not succeed in halting the Greek advance towards Ankara in the

³⁸¹ Ahmet Efe, *Çerkez Ethem* (İstanbul: Bengi Kitap Yayın, 2009), 23.

³⁸² In late 1930s Tarık Mümtaz Göztepe, who was declared as *persona non gratae* by Turkish government in 1924 due to his anti-nationalist activities during the Turkish-Greek War, did an interview with Çerkes Ethem in Amman/Jordan. In the interview Ethem expressed that he was working to bring back Enver Paşa to Anatolia in 1920 to replace Mustafa Kemal. He would try Mustafa Kemal due to his involvement and mismanagement in Yozgat incident to succeed Enver's returning to Anatolia. However, because of his older brother Reşid's interference, Ethem could not succeed to try Mustafa Kemal and Enver's return to Anatolia. Tarık Mümtaz Göztepe, *Osmanoğulları'nın Son Padişahı Sultan Vahideddin Mütareke Gayyasında* (İstanbul: Sebil Yayınevi, 1969), 247.

³⁸³ Cebesoy, *Moskova Hatıraları*, 223.

³⁸⁴ Ibid. 234-235.

³⁸⁵ Ibid. 227.

³⁸⁶ Zürcher, *The Unionist Factor*, 129.

Sakarya battle, Enver would come to Anatolia with major Muslim forces backed by the Bolsheviks.³⁸⁷ Mustafa Kemal already grasped the severity of the situation, warning the eastern front commander of the army Kazım Karabekir to be vigilant against possible attempts to bring Enver to Anatolia.³⁸⁸ However, with the success of the nationalists against Greek forces in the Sakarya battle, two birds were effectively killed with a single stone: both Ankara and Mustafa Kemal were saved, while the Soviets accepted Mustafa Kemal's leadership and Enver lost his opportunity to return to Turkey and become leader of the national movement.³⁸⁹

After the battle of Sakarya, Enver turned his attention to Central Asia and his aim of promoting Islamic unity and fighting against the British by mobilising the Muslims of the region.³⁹⁰ He asked Sami (Kuşçubaşı) to send his brother Eşref to him.³⁹¹ Enver probably thought it was wise to gather his inner circle around him in Central Asia after they had lost their battle against Mustafa Kemal in Anatolia, as a necessary part of mobilising other Muslims to fight with the British. However, he was unable to succeed in his aim and was killed in a battle against Russian forces on 4 August 1922 in what is now Tajikistan.

³⁸⁷ Cebesoy, *Moskova Hatıraları*, 244-245.

³⁸⁸ Karabekir, *İstiklâl Harbimizde Enver Paşa ve İttihat Terakki Erkânı*, 132-137.

³⁸⁹ Zürcher, *The Unionist Factor*, 129,130.

³⁹⁰ TİTE. K58G69B69001, 26 Teşrinievvel 1338 (26, Ekim, 1922) the date was the letters' recorded dates by the Intelligence of Ankara. These two letters could be among the very last letters of Enver Paşa since he was killed on 4 August 1922.

³⁹¹ TİTE. K58G69B69001, 26 Teşrinievvel 1338 (26, Ekim, 1922).

2 - North Caucasian Republic: The Split between Mustafa Kemal and Enver Paşa

After the February Revolution in Russia, the North Caucasian notables established a committee, comprised of socialists, wealthier landowners and liberals, to organise a congress to discuss the future of the North Caucasus and its people.³⁹² The congress was held on 7 May 1917 and consisted of 300 delegates: Circassians, Dagestanis, Abkhazs, Turkmens and Nogays.³⁹³ The aim of Congress was to unite the different peoples of the North Caucasus under the ideals of ‘liberty, equality and fraternity’ (as espoused by the French Revolution) and under a Federal-Democratic state structure in Russia.³⁹⁴ The Cossacks, who settled the region after the indigenous population of the North Caucasus (the Circassians, Chechens, Abkhaz, Dagestanis and Karachays) were exiled by Russia during the 19th century, and were already seeking self-governance. Although they attempted to work together with the Cossacks against the Bolsheviks, the alliance did not work and conflict soon emerged between the Chechen-Ingush and the Cossacks (over land disputes).³⁹⁵ Due to the conflict, and the spread of Bolshevism in the region, the committee altered its status from that of a federal state under Russia, becoming a sovereign ‘Provisional Government’ on 15 November 1917.³⁹⁶ Abdulmejid Chermoev was elected President, and independence was declared with the support of the Ottoman Porte on 11 May 1918.

The independence of this entity was another cause of controversy between Mustafa Kemal and Enver Paşa. Arguably, the different approaches the two men took provided a further incentive for Mustafa Kemal to pacify those close to Enver Paşa. Mustafa Kemal’s policy was to secure Russian financial and military assistance for the Anatolian resistance campaign. He opposed any independent state in the Caucasus

³⁹² Mitat Çelikpala, “Search For a Common North Caucasian Identity: The Mountaineers’ Attempts For Survival and Unity Response to the Russian Rule” (PhD Thesis, Bilkent University, 2002), 63.

³⁹³ Ibid. 64.

³⁹⁴ Ibid. 64-66.

³⁹⁵ Ibid. 72-73.

³⁹⁶ Ibid. 74.

between Russia and Turkey. For him, any possible state in the Caucasus had potential to prevent Russian aid arriving, and could worsen the relationships between the two countries. It was also believed by some Special Organisation analysts that it would not be possible to mobilise the Caucasian Muslims, due to their very limited political aims.³⁹⁷ Therefore, he chose not to support the existence of the North Caucasian Republic. However, Enver Paşa and the other prominent figures of the time, such as Rauf and Bekir Sami (Kunduh) Beys, did not agree with this policy. For them, a barrier between Russia and the Ottoman Empire was a crucial must-have. Enver also believed that in the post-WWI period, such a policy should be supported, to keep the Bolsheviks out of the Caucasus, and cut the Armenians' connection with Russia if Enver could gain sufficient support from the Caucasian Muslims and Georgians.³⁹⁸

Mustafa Kemal believed that the Allies used the Caucasian nations (the Azeris, Armenians, Georgians and the people of the North Caucasus) to prevent Turkey from connecting with the Bolsheviks. For him, this was a ploy by the Allies to support the Caucasian republics, which would ultimately hamper the Anatolian movement's access to Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and India. If Turkey worked with the Bolsheviks and helped them in the Caucasus, the doors of these regions would then be opened to Turkey.³⁹⁹ He referred to the Caucasian states as a 'barrier', and expected that Turkey should fight to stop the Allies to establish the republics in the Caucasus.⁴⁰⁰ Mustafa Kemal underlined the suggestion that if the Caucasian states were to act as a wedge between Turkey and Russia (in other words, if they are hostile to the Bolsheviks or if they became independent) then Turkey and Russia would need to work together against them.⁴⁰¹

³⁹⁷Michael A. Reynolds, *Shattering Empires: The Clash and Collapse of the Ottoman and Russian Empires, 1908-1918* / (Cambridge, UK ; New York : Cambridge University Press, 2011).. 221.

³⁹⁸ Ibid. 195.

³⁹⁹ *Harb Tarihi Vesikaları Dergisi*, year 5, issue 19, 15 March 1956. Document no 388, 2.

⁴⁰⁰ *Harb Tarihi Vesikaları Dergisi*, year 5, issue 19, 15 March 1956. Document no 388, 2.

⁴⁰¹ *Harb Tarihi Vesikaları Dergisi*, year 5, issue 19, 15 March 1956. Document no 388, 3.

Meanwhile, some of those who would later be excluded from the national movement supported the proposal that there be an independent Caucasus Federation in the Caucasus. Those espousing this view included Ali Fuat Paşa, Rauf Bey, Bekir Sami and Yusuf İzzet Paşa. According to Ali Fuat Paşa, the federation would be expected to consist of several autonomous states. However, due flawed policies executed by the British, such a federation could not be established.⁴⁰² Rauf Bey had already worked to convince the Ottoman government that the government should meet with the British to prevent the expansion of the Bolsheviks into the Caucasus. They could then safeguard the region against being swallowed up by the Bolshevik movement. However, Rauf's precondition was that their (the Ottoman Empire's) independence must be recognised by the British.⁴⁰³ The 14th Corps Commander, Yusuf İzzet Paşa, was also against the suggestion that the Allies build a Caucasian barrier in the Caucasus, because Bolshevism was an ideology, and, for him, to prevent an ideology by forming a physical barrier was not possible.⁴⁰⁴ The 13. Corps Commander, Ahmet Cevdet, also sent a telegram to Mustafa Kemal emphasising that working with the British against the Bolsheviks would be better for both Turkey and the Islamic world. He underlined that Russia was already seen as an ancient enemy of the Ottoman Empire by the people, and if the Bolsheviks were to sustain Tsarist Russia's policies, they would aim to occupy the east of Anatolia to reach the Turkish Mediterranean coast. Thus, on balance it might be better to reach an agreement with the British.⁴⁰⁵

At the end of 1920, when the North Caucasian Republic collapsed under Bolshevik attacks, the executive delegates and founders of the republic attempted to move to Turkey as they had been supported by the Ottoman Empire, particularly by Enver Paşa. However, the political situation also then altered in Turkey. Enver left the empire, which

⁴⁰² Cebesoy, *Moskova Hatıraları*. 8.

⁴⁰³ *Harb Tarihi Vesikaları Dergisi*, year 5, issue 19, 15 March 1956. Document no 389.

⁴⁰⁴ *Harb Tarihi Vesikaları Dergisi*, year 5, issue 19, 15 March 1956. Document no 303, 2.

⁴⁰⁵ *Harb Tarihi Vesikaları Dergisi*, year 5, issue 19, 15 March 1956. Document no 302, 2-3.

was occupied by the Allies and the Greek forces. Moreover, Mustafa Kemal came to power choosing not to share the same policies as Enver Paşa in terms of having a state in the North Caucasus between Bolshevik Russia and Turkey. Nevertheless, he had an ambivalent policy towards the North Caucasian Republic. On the one hand, he believed that if Turkey supported an independent state in the Caucasus, this would damage the relationship between the Bolsheviks and Turkey; moreover, Turkey would no longer receive military and financial support from the Bolsheviks. On the other hand, although he did not want to extend support to the North Caucasian republic, he preferred not to end their relationship with the republic either, wanting to keep them as a possible ally against the Bolsheviks. The Ankara government tried to use Azerbaijan and North Caucasian Muslims to act as a buffer against Russia in case it subsequently insisted on making the Bitlis and Van regions part of Armenia.⁴⁰⁶ On 23 December 1920, about 20 people; consisting of the President of the North Caucasus Republic, Pşımafo Kosof, a full colonel, three other lesser colonels, three lieutenants, two doctors, students and group of soldiers as representatives of the republic, moved to Trabzon from the North Caucasus.⁴⁰⁷ Their demands were to extend their security measures in Turkey, to serve Turkey and to meet with the Ankara government.⁴⁰⁸ However, despite the fact that Ankara was unwilling to abandon the committee entirely, they were still hankering for collaboration with the Russians in some fields. Russia was viewed as a saviour by Ankara, particularly Mustafa Kemal, in terms of military and financial support. Hence, the leaders of the committee were not allowed to gain an appointment with the Ankara government.⁴⁰⁹ It can also be

⁴⁰⁶ Salâhi Ramadan Sonyel, *Turkish Diplomacy, 1918-1923 : Mustafa Kemal and the Turkish National Movement* /, Sage Studies in 20th Century History ; (London : Sage Publications, 1975), 47.

⁴⁰⁷ ATASE.İSH. 912/51, document no ai, aia, 27/12/1920. ATASE.İSH. 912/51, document ac, ad. The names were Cemaleddin Usalof, Mehmed Asive ... zade, Mehmed ...zade, Mikail Askerzade, Yusuf Kemalzade, İbrahim Kemalzade, Davud Malikzade, Ali Malikzade, Atalay Çerkeszade, Mehmed Mustafazade, Şemseddin Hatif, Mahmud Hatif, Sultan ..., ... Kazım. The names were recorded at 23 December 1920 by the officials from Ankara government. ATASE.İSH. 912/51, document ac.

⁴⁰⁸ ATASE.İSH. 912/51, document ai, aia 27/12/1920. ATASE.İSH. 912/51, document aa 7/1/1337 (1920).

⁴⁰⁹ ATASE.İSH. 912/51, 5-6/2/1337 (1920).

seen that Ankara pragmatically attempted to use the committee to strengthen its hand to bargain with the Russians. It was thereby demonstrated by Ankara that it could exert an influence on the North Caucasia and its representatives.⁴¹⁰ Therefore, while Ankara might require financial and military aid, the Bolsheviks would know that Ankara was not powerless against them.

3- Green Army Society ‘Yeşil Ordu Cemiyeti’

The Green Army Society has been a controversial topic of discussion in historiography. The founders of the Society, who included Mustafa Kemal, never applied to make the society an official one.⁴¹¹ It remained a secret and unofficial organisation. The ideology of the society developed out of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, and aimed to mix Bolshevik ideology and Islam, and attempted to merge Islam and socialism in a single system, offering an alternative to the existing western capitalist one. The ideology was welcomed by a group of politicians and bureaucrats in Turkey since the country was already in a state of war at this time with the Western powers. The idea of society resulted from the alliance between CUP members who still had connections to Enver, Talat and Cemal Paşas, and leftists who wanted to become allied with Bolshevik Russia and Mustafa Kemal in the spring of 1920.⁴¹² All the founding members of the society were MPs: Tokat MP Nazım, Hakkı Behiç, Adnan (Adıvar), İzmit MP Sırrı, İzmit MP Hamdi Namık, Muğla MP Yunus Nadi, Saruhan MP İbrahim Süreyya, Saruhan MP Çerkes Reşit, Eskişehir MP Hüsrev Sami, Eskişehir MP Eyüb Sabri, Kozan MP Dr. Mustafa, Bursa MP

⁴¹⁰ ATASE.İSH. 912/51, document ag 19-20/01/1921.

⁴¹¹ Mete Tunçay, *Türkiye’de Sol Akımlar: 1908-1925 /*, Ankara Üniversitesi. Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Yayınları; (Ankara : Ankara Üniversitesi - Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Yayınları, 1967), 85.

⁴¹² Emel Akal, *İştirakiyuncular, Komünistler ve Paşa Hazretleri Moskova-Ankara-Londra Üçgeninde* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2014), 62.

Şeyh Servet, and Afyon MP Mehmet Şükrü.⁴¹³ They set up the society, and published the New World (*Yeni Dünya*) newspaper as an official publication.

The leftist members of the alliance believed that it was not possible for Ankara to succeed in defeating the Allies using its power alone. They believed that to create a union under the banner of socialism in the Muslim World would bring Muslims together against the imperialists. Moreover, Turkey would be a leader in this struggle, as it would not be alone in its fight against the Allies.⁴¹⁴ They also thought that they would save the Muslims who were already under Russian occupation. This policy would not only benefit Green Army supporters, but would also be useful for the Bolsheviks, since they would only have to mediate via Turkey/the Green Army on behalf of the entire Muslim World.⁴¹⁵ The centre of the society was Eskişehir,⁴¹⁶ where there were labour groups that agreed with the ideology of the Green Army. There were also supporters of the Society in the assembly in Ankara. It published a newspaper to spread its Islamic-Bolshevik ideas. The name of the newspaper was ‘the Friend’ (*Arkadaş*), but the title later changed to ‘the Mobilised [ones]’. Thereafter, it became ‘New World’ (*Seyyare Yeni Dünya*) when Arif Oruç returned to Eskişehir from the western front on 6 September 1920.⁴¹⁷ In the title, the word ‘mobilised’ was referred to Ethem’s ‘mobilised forces’ (*Kuva-yi Seyyare*).⁴¹⁸ The relationship between the two sides was critical to both. The Ankara government required a vast amount of financial and military equipment to continue its struggle against Greek troops backed by the British. Russia was also seeking a political ally against the western-capitalist powers, particularly the British. The Bolsheviks did not like to see the British

⁴¹³ Zübeyir Uzun, “Milli Mücadele’de Çerkez Ethem ve Kuva-yı Seyyare’nin Faaliyetleri (1919–1920)” (Master Thesis, Selçuk University, 2008), 81.

⁴¹⁴ Ali Fuat Cebesoy, *Millî Mücadele Hâtıraları* / 2. baskı., Temel Yayınları Sertifika No; (İstanbul: Temel, 2010). 514, 528.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid. 515.

⁴¹⁶ Tunçay, *Türkiye’de Sol Akımlar*, 85.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid. 85, 127 endnote 91.

⁴¹⁸ Ethem’s irregular forces were called as *Kuva-yi Seyyare*, the Mobile Forces. The actual number of the armed people were about 5.000 only 500 of them were foot soldiers, the rest of the forces were cavaliers.

forces and Allies on its Southern border, in the Black sea region, and in Istanbul; therefore, they supported the Anatolian resistance movement against the Greeks.

A huge amount of financial and military aid was given by the Bolsheviks to the Ankara government. In its first round of meetings with the Ankara government, Ankara demanded the Bolsheviks provide the following: 200 thousand rifles with 5 million bullets, 500 machine guns with 7.5 million bullets, military clothes and equipment for 100 thousand soldiers, 200 aircraft, 100 lorries and buses, 40 automobiles, and some military experts in addition to other military equipment.⁴¹⁹ Responding to these demands, the first military and financial aid was sent in September 1920. According to Yusuf Kemal Bey's telegram from Trabzon, the train contained one million golden rubbles, one wagon for rifles, eight wagons for machine guns, in addition to 300 thousand bullets, 6 thousand rifles, one hundred machine guns, and eight British artilleries.⁴²⁰ It can be said that Mustafa Kemal's strategy of relying on Bolshevik financial and military aid was successful during the Turkish-Greek War. Up until the end of the war, Bolshevik financial aid amounted to 11 million golden rubbles and 100 thousand Ottoman golden liras (equal to 90 million Ottoman liras).⁴²¹ It is worth mentioning that Turkey's budget was 63 million in 1920 and 79 million in 1921. This means that the Russian financial aid exceeded Turkey's annual budget in 1920 and 1921. Total military aid was 45,181 rifles, 9,520 bayonets, 52,599 ammunition chests, 310 machine guns, and 166,910 cannon balls, along with other military equipment.⁴²² One can see the results of this aid: from the end of WWI to the Turkish-Greek War, Russia represented the greatest threat to the Ottoman Empire and was its best ally, thanks to the extensive military and financial assistance it extended to the nationalists of Anatolia.⁴²³

⁴¹⁹ Cebesoy, *Moskova Hatıraları*, 78-79.

⁴²⁰ Ibid. 82.

⁴²¹ Stefanos Yerasimos, *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri; Ekim Devriminden "Milli Mücadele"ye* (İstanbul: Gözlem Yayınevi, 1979), 630,634,635.

⁴²² Ibid. 630-634.

⁴²³ Reynolds, *Shattering Empires*.255.

Mustafa Kemal was not a communist, and nor did he believe in communist ideology. He had differences with the Bolsheviks in terms of culture and tradition and aimed to gain benefits from interactions with them to protect Anatolia from occupation, rather than to create a new Bolshevik state.⁴²⁴ He routinely used communist rhetoric in speeches during the war to gain Russian support; as they were the enemy of Turkey's enemy, they were through this mutual enmity a friend of Turkey. However, Mustafa Kemal struggled to maintain control of Bolshevik support in Anatolia, as the communists and their associations were becoming influential during this period. Small communist groups in Anatolia were assisted by the Bolsheviks, and of these, many members had been prisoners of war in Russia during WWI.⁴²⁵ Ankara was aware of the potential danger from the Russians gaining control over Anatolian communists, and an official communist party was set up under the control of Mustafa Kemal in Ankara. The Communist Party of Turkey (*Türkiye Komünist Fırkası*) was established on 18 October 1920.⁴²⁶ However, the Bolsheviks had never believed Ankara would make communism its official political ideology. They already recognised that Ankara was seeking Russian support out of pragmatism.

Also at this time, the influence of the Green Army organisation gradually increased in Ankara and Mustafa Kemal lost control of it.⁴²⁷ The organisation favoured using irregular forces rather than regular troops for fighting. The success of Çerkes Ethem's irregular forces against both the Greeks and the anti-nationalist incidents solidified the suggestion that they use irregular forces. When Ethem was in Ankara, either before the suppression of the disorders in Yozgat or upon return from Yozgat, he joined

⁴²⁴ *Grand National Assembly, Secret session 26, 3 July 1336 (1920)*, <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/GZC/d01/CILT01/gcz01001026.pdf>, accessed 14/11/2014, 72.

⁴²⁵ Cebesoy, *Moskova Hatıraları*, 36.

⁴²⁶ Uzun, "Milli Mücadele'de Çerkes Ethem ve Kuva-yı Seyyare'nin Faaliyetleri (1919–1920)." 102.

⁴²⁷ Yerasimos, *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri; Ekim Devriminden "Milli Mücadele"ye*, 528-529.

the Green Army.⁴²⁸ With the involvement of Ethem in the Green Army through his (at a minimum) 3000 irregular cavaliers, this became a very significant irregular armed political force at the time.⁴²⁹ One of his military units began to be called the ‘Bolshevik Battalion’, having about 300 soldiers and 5 lieutenants under its control.⁴³⁰ Although Mustafa Kemal attempted to keep the Society under his sway, he was unsuccessful, as it turned into an important centre of anti-Mustafa Kemal activity. From the outset, as noted above, it was endorsed by Mustafa Kemal with the aim of receiving Russian military and financial support. However, with Ethem’s participation in the Society, the political balance of power changed in Ankara. While the society increased its political influence and power, Ethem’s participation as leader of the leading irregular armed group of the era showed that it was becoming an uncontrollable political group from the perspective of Mustafa Kemal.⁴³¹ He did not want to have to battle against powerful or armed political opponents in the assembly. As a result of Ethem’s increasing political and military influence on Ankara, and over the Bolshevik backed communists, Mustafa Kemal’s authority was beginning to falter. Therefore, he closed down the Society in the autumn of 1920.⁴³² Those who participated in the Green Army out of leftist sympathies (e.g. Eyüp Sabri, Adnan, Şeyh Servet, Hakkı Behiç, Nazım, and Yunus) then established the ‘People’s Group’ (*Halk Zümresi*) in the assembly, offering a left wing alternative to Mustafa Kemal.⁴³³ However, with the exclusion of Ethem from the nationalist core, the leftists in Ankara were silenced by Mustafa Kemal.⁴³⁴

⁴²⁸ Tunçay, *Türkiye’de Sol Akımlar*, 85.

⁴²⁹ Zürcher, *The Unionist Factor*, 125.

⁴³⁰ Uzun, “‘Milli Mücadele’de Çerkez Ethem ve Kuva-yı Seyyare’nin Faaliyetleri (1919–1920).” 96.

⁴³¹ Cemal Şener, *Çerkes Ethem Olayı* (İstanbul: Ant Yayınları, 1990), 107.

⁴³² Later on, after Çerkes Ethem was excluded from the national movement, Ethem, Tevfik, Reşit and some of Ethem’s friends; Manyaslı Şevket (Takığ), lieutenant İbrahim, gendarme lieutenant Sami, Halil, police officer Artin, Çerkes Ahmet, Reşat, colonel Abdullah were sentenced to death by an Ankara government’s court on 9 May 1921 due to their activities in the Green Army society see Uzun, “‘Milli Mücadele’de Çerkez Ethem ve Kuva-yı Seyyare’nin Faaliyetleri (1919–1920).” 103.

⁴³³ Zürcher, *The Unionist Factor*, 125, 126.

⁴³⁴ Ibid. 127.

4- The Struggle between *Kuva-yi Seyyare* and Ankara government

Ethem lacked the political experience of Mustafa Kemal. He was the leader of a paramilitary group and more a man of arms than of politics. He had fought on many different fronts, spending over ten years in the army. Mustafa Kemal, when compared to Ethem, was educated in one of the best schools of the empire at the time; the Royal Military Academy. Although he fought in several wars for the Ottoman army in North Africa, the Balkans, Anatolia and Syria during the eight years up until 1918, he was never far removed from politics. Ever since the end of WWI, he had been seeking out a role in the new cabinet of the Ottoman Empire, primarily to occupy the post of Minister of War.⁴³⁵ It is also claimed that the reason behind his move to the Pera Palace after the Moudros Armistice in October 1918 was a reflection of his political desire to become involved in the new cabinet. Certainly, Pera Palace was well used by the commanders of the occupation forces, and an important centre for those who were seeking political careers in the new post-WWI Ottoman political scene.⁴³⁶ His experience and knowledge of politics were more significant than those of Ethem. Ethem, however, had some qualities that were difficult for Mustafa Kemal to match. Although he was a member of a Circassian immigrant family, which had come to Anatolia from the North Caucasus, probably in the late 1860s, he had a large family providing him many local networks in Anatolia. His father was from Bandırma, west of Anatolia, one of the founders of the Izmir branch of the CUP, and a member of well-known local wealthy family, while Ethem's mother was from the North Western town in Anatolia, Düzce. Both of places were settled by significant number of Circassians.

Circassians lived as closed community for a long time. As an immigrant/diaspora community, they preferred to marry within their own community, avoiding mixing with

⁴³⁵ M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *Atatürk: An Intellectual Biography* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2011). 1.

⁴³⁶ Charles King, *Midnight at the Pera Palace: The Birth of Modern Istanbul* (New York : W.W. Norton and Company, 2014), 54-55.

the different Anatolian communities. Marriages were an important factor in the survival of their networks and identity. They married young and built up internal community relations between the different regions of Anatolia. These marriages connected different Circassian communities around Anatolia. Another significant feature was their experience of war. They had fought many wars between the 1750s, up until the 1860s, principally against Russian forces who wanted to occupy the North Caucasus. Although they did not have a formal state structure in the North Caucasus, they had skilled fighters in their ranks. However, after many battles, they were ultimately defeated and were exiled to the Ottoman Empire from the Caucasus. Here, they had two options; either to begin their new lives as farmers, or to be recruited into the Ottoman army. The latter option was more preferable to many Circassians.

Ethem experienced many paramilitary wars in the Ottoman army in the years leading up to the end of WWI. From the Balkan Wars to WWI, Ethem had been active in the military. Furthermore, when Greek forces occupied western Anatolia, he had been one of the first to fight against them and halt their advance into Anatolia. However, after a year and half of Greek occupation (beginning on 15th of May 1919), in autumn 1920, Ankara took crucial steps to solidify its authority in terms of its military power and financing, and to launch effective counter attacks. With the military and financial backing of the Bolsheviks, military successes on the eastern and southern fronts of Anatolia against the Georgians, Armenians and French forces ensued, and Ankara now had a force more prepared to act as a regular army than ever before. It did not need the irregular forces on the western front any longer. Ethem was also seen as the leader of the Anatolian branch of Mustafa Kemal's rival, Enver Paşa. From the beginning of the movement, Mustafa Kemal did not want to challenge Enver openly. However, after some prominent figures of the CUP, including Rauf Bey, İsmail Canbulat and Fethi Okyar were arrested by British forces, no powerful political leaders against him remained. Although opposition groups

in the assembly prevented him from creating an authoritarian single man regime, other MPs supported Mustafa Kemal.⁴³⁷ In this situation, Ethem was the only person in Anatolia to command a non-political but armed group, which could potentially create problems for Mustafa Kemal.

Ethem and his brother were continuously criticised as ruthless by their opponents. They had chosen to execute deserters and ‘rebels’ after only a short judicial process in a self-styled ‘military court’. This policy led to an ambiguous relationship between Ankara and Ethem. On the one hand, Ankara supported Ethem, since he was resistant to Greek forces, restoring the order in the country and suppressed anti-nationalist movements.⁴³⁸ However, the way in which Ethem implemented his policy was controversial from the perspective of some members of the assembly. Although Ankara did not oppose the use of violence to suppress disorder, anti-nationalist incidents, or to implement its policies, the excessive use of violence by Ethem would be exploited by Ankara as one factor demonstrating the unamenable personality of Ethem.

The problem on the western front was that there was a power struggle underway. Until the regular army was militarily strengthened by Ankara, resistance against the Greek forces was overseen by irregular forces such as Ethem and Demirci Mehmet Efe.⁴³⁹ These irregular forces set up lines of resistance against the Greek troops, before the regular forces gained power. Although they were ruthless against those who rose against Ankara, they organised their forces effectively ensuring order. On the other hand, there were people in the army and assembly who represented state power, and came to the stage very late. For example, İsmet (İnönü) and Fevzi (Çakmak) joined the Anatolian movement

⁴³⁷ Demirel, *Birinci Meclis'te Muhalefet*, 25-28.

⁴³⁸ Mustafa Kemal mentioned Ethem's name first time in the assembly by saying that he is a talented (kıymetli) friend of we were grateful of him because of his act against Anzavur. “The Secret Session Records of the Grand National Assembly, Secret Session 8, 1 May 1336 (1920), 6. <http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/GZC/d01/CILT01/gcz01001008.pdf> Accessed 14/08/2016.

⁴³⁹ Demirci Efe was a local armed leader. He also resisted the Greek occupation.

very late, at the end of April 1920. Their appointment to important positions by Mustafa Kemal, as can be seen from İsmet's appointment as commander of the Western front, caused new problems. For those who were at the front from the very beginning of the occupation of Anatolia, such as Çerkes Ethem, it was not easy to accept serving under those who came to the front very late.

5 - The Beginning of the End: The Simav and Gediz Battles

After Ethem suppressed the incident in Yozgat, he returned the Western front. In some areas of the Western front, as with the people in Düzce, Adapazarı and South Marmara, many had little sympathy for the nationalist forces. The nationalists were viewed as responsible for the continuation of war, high taxation and conscription. For example, in Simav, the nationalists faced stiff opposition from the populace. On 12 July 1920, Greek occupation forces began to march towards Kütahya. They did not face local resistance in the region, particularly in Simav, where people were opposed to the nationalist forces.⁴⁴⁰ Ethem was appointed commander of Kütahya and surrounding areas on 27 July 1920, and in Kütahya 400 prisoners were released and armed by him, and another 150 people joined his forces as volunteers.⁴⁴¹ He moved to Simav with 5,000 men, both cavalry and infantries with 4 canons and 14 machine guns.⁴⁴² In Simav, a group of local people worked with the Greek forces. Ethem tried to convince them to do otherwise, but failed to do so. On 30 July 1920, Ethem entered the town and fought with the Greek sympathisers there.⁴⁴³ On this occasion, 50 people were killed by Ethem's forces and another 50 left wounded.⁴⁴⁴

⁴⁴⁰ "The Open Session Records of the Grand National Assembly, Open Session 54, 21 August 1336 (1920), 366-367. <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/TBMM/d01/c003/tbmm01003054.pdf>. Accessed 29/06/2016.

⁴⁴¹ Uzun, "Milli Mücadele'de Çerkez Ethem ve Kuva-Yı Seyyare'nin Faaliyetleri (1919-1920)." 108.

⁴⁴² Ibid. 108.

⁴⁴³ Cebesoy, *Milli Mücadele Hâtıraları*, 507.

⁴⁴⁴ Uzun, "Milli Mücadele'de Çerkez Ethem ve Kuva-yı Seyyare'nin Faaliyetleri (1919-1920)." 108.

He then moved on to the north of Demirci town. There, his forces confronted the Greek troops. Ethem attacked them using guerrilla tactics to weaken their position. Ali Fuat Paşa agreed with Ethem's use of guerrilla tactics as important to the nationalists,⁴⁴⁵ since they were already aware that the nationalists did not have sufficient military force or supplies to sustain a longer engagement. Ethem's first attack was on the 30/31 July 1920, and his forces were successful. Four days later, the Greeks launched a counter-offensive against Ethem's forces. Ethem's forces withdrew to the east of Demirci town on 5 August.⁴⁴⁶ Then, in the early morning of 18 August, Ethem carried out a surprise raid against the Greeks who were then forced to the south of Demirci town.⁴⁴⁷ The resulting 15 day long confrontation between Ethem's forces and Greek troops, resulted in a unit of the Greek army which consisted of ten thousand, losing its ability to sustain military operations.⁴⁴⁸ According to Ali Fuat Paşa, Ethem had successfully proved that his forces were not only useful for resolving domestic problems and incidents, but could also be helpful to counter Greek forces via guerrilla tactics.⁴⁴⁹ Ethem's forces were officially then referred to by the Ankara government as the 'First Mobile Forces' (*Birinci Kuva-yi Seyyare*), particularly after the *Kuva-yi Milliye* forces began participating with the regular forces, following a government decision on 18 September 1920.⁴⁵⁰

The Gediz Battle (24 October – 12 November 1920) holds an important place in the history of the western front. The battle was between Greek forces and the Anatolian movement, which consisted of the *Kuva-yi Seyyare* and the regular army. For Ali Fuat Paşa, the Gediz raid was crucial from the perspective of the nationalists, in terms of cutting off the lines between Greek troops in Uşak and Bursa. Moreover, the raid was not

⁴⁴⁵ Cebesoy, *Millî Mücadele Hâtıraları*, 508.

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid. 507.

⁴⁴⁷ "The Open Session Records of the Grand National Assembly, Open Session 54, 21 August 1336 (1920), 366-367. <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/TBMM/d01/c003/tbmm01003054.pdf>. Accessed 29/06/2016.

⁴⁴⁸ Cebesoy, *Millî Mücadele Hâtıraları*, 508.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid. 508.

⁴⁵⁰ Uzun, "Millî Mücadele'de Çerkez Ethem ve Kuva-yı Seyyare'nin Faaliyetleri (1919–1920)." 112.

costly for the nationalists, since the ammunition used during it had been obtained from the Italians.⁴⁵¹ Division 61, 11 and Ethem's forces were later moved towards Gediz. However, the raid proved instrumental for Mustafa Kemal and his close circle, as he was able to strengthen his power over the front, and later Mustafa Kemal created his own narrative about the period in *Nutuk*. Nonetheless, the events that took place here were controversial and increased disagreement between Mustafa Kemal and Ethem, and his brothers Tevfik and Reşit. This was because Ali Fuat Paşa, Ethem and Mustafa Kemal, and İsmet Bey were on the western front making plans to deal with Greek forces in Gediz. Mustafa Kemal and İsmet Bey were against attacking these forces for military reasons because they believed the army was not ready for such an attack. Although the attack could potentially be successful in the long term, due to a shortage of military equipment and a lack of regular army, the army would ultimately not be able to resist a possible Greek counter-attack.⁴⁵² As a result of the battle, the Greeks had to deal with the Anatolian movement for the first time, and although the attack was largely an unorganised one, the Greek forces were forced to leave Gediz. Nevertheless, Ali Fuat Paşa, Ethem, his brothers, and the leaders of the regular army İsmet and Refet Beys, then criticised one another for the unorganised nature of the attack.⁴⁵³ Ethem argued that the regular army had not committed to fulfilling their duty. On the other hand, the Commander of the Western front, Ali Fuat Paşa, tried to find a middle way between the *Kuva-yi Seyyare* and the regular army, in order to reconcile them. However, his strategy did not work.

Although Mustafa Kemal did not criticise the Gediz raid at the time, later, when Ethem and Ankara had seen their relationship collapse, he went on to claim that Greek forces had not been defeated during the encounter. He argued that they merely withdrew

⁴⁵¹ Cebesoy, *Millî Mücadele Hâtıraları*, 559-562.

⁴⁵² "The Secret Session Records of the Grand National Assembly, Secret Session." 125, 29.12.1336 (1920), 276. <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/GZC/d01/CILT01/gcz01001125.pdf>. accessed 23/08/2015.

⁴⁵³ Kazım Özalp, *Millî Mücadele 1. Cilt 1919-1922* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1998), 166.

from Gediz to avoid taking risks (because of foggy weather) and that the town was then taken by nationalist forces.⁴⁵⁴ As a result of the battle, he concluded that Ali Fuat Paşa should be removed from the western front.⁴⁵⁵ While aiming to control the Western front, he coveted the loyalty of the commander at the front. Indeed, it was not possible for Mustafa Kemal to gain complete control over the front while Ali Fuat Paşa was in charge, since the latter was a leading military member of the Anatolian movement who had moved there before Mustafa Kemal. Mustafa Kemal favoured choosing a military man who would be loyal to his decisions and who would not challenge him. Ismet and Refet were the two appropriate candidates assigned for this job. However, the problem then was how to remove Ali Fuat Paşa from the front without creating additional difficulties.

In order to achieve control over military units and fronts, Mustafa Kemal used different strategies. Just as has already been seen in Chapter 2 in reference to the Anzavur Ahmed incident, loyalist Circassians and Pomaks also rose up against nationalist forces in the Gönen–Manyas region in early 1920. Yusuf İzzet Paşa,⁴⁵⁶ who was the commander of the nationalist forces in the region, did not attack the group. Mustafa Kemal expressed his suspicions that Yusuf İzzet Paşa did not attack since they were also Circassians. On 6 January 1920, Mustafa Kemal asked Bekir Sami via telegram whether, during the Anzavur incident, contact was made between the Circassian bandit leaders, Çerkes Şevket, Şah İsmail and Çerkes Ethem, Yusuf İzzet Paşa and Ahmet Fevzi Paşa or not. According to Mustafa Kemal, contact among the Circassians and associated support from military officers could be a potential cause of conflict between the Turks and Circassians.⁴⁵⁷ As he did not wish to face further problems on this front, Mustafa Kemal

⁴⁵⁴ “The Secret Session Records of the Grand National Assembly, Secret Session.” 125, 29.12.1336 (1920), 276. <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/GZC/d01/CILT01/gcz01001125.pdf>. accessed 23/08/2015.

⁴⁵⁵ Kemal Atatürk, *Nutuk* (Istanbul : Devlet Matbaası, 1934), 51.

⁴⁵⁶ (Met, Janutuko) Yusuf İzzet Paşa (1876-1922): A Circassian major general of the nationalist forces. He was in charge of the 14th army corps.

⁴⁵⁷ TTK. Bekir Sami dosya 16, 598-599-600.

invited Yusuf İzzet Paşa to Ankara to join the assembly, to become an MP. As head of the assembly, Mustafa Kemal could have removed Yusuf İzzet Paşa from the military unit. However, instead he followed a different approach, inviting him to Ankara, thereby preventing any possible dispute in either the assembly or at the western front. Yusuf İzzet Paşa accepted Mustafa Kemal's offer, joining the assembly as an MP before he left the military unit.

In Ali Fuat Paşa's case, Mustafa Kemal employed a similar strategy to that used in the case of Yusuf İzzet Paşa's, instead of forcing him to leave from the Western front. Due to the developing relationships with the Bolshevik Russians, Ankara required a permanent ambassador in Moscow to maintain relations and ensure financial aid would be available at a certain level. Ali Fuat Paşa was selected by Mustafa Kemal as Turkish ambassador to Moscow, claiming that he was a well-known general, and an enemy of the British. He was expected to have a good effect on Moscow.⁴⁵⁸ On November 10, the Ankara government appointed Ali Fuat Paşa as Ambassador to Moscow.⁴⁵⁹

However, the plan was carried out without Ali Fuat Paşa having ever been informed. Indeed, he was appointed Ambassador to Moscow by Mustafa Kemal while still at the Western front.⁴⁶⁰ He was therefore invited by Mustafa Kemal to Ankara. Ali Fuat Paşa, without being aware of Mustafa Kemal's decision, came to Ankara where he was welcomed at the train station by him.⁴⁶¹ The decision was taken without any consultations, Ali Fuat Paşa was informed by Mustafa Kemal of the post at the train

⁴⁵⁸ "The Secret Session Records of the Grand National Assembly, Secret Session." 125, 29.12.1336 (1920), 276. <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/GZC/d01/CILT01/gcz01001125.pdf>. accessed 23/08/2015.

⁴⁵⁹ In Nutuk, Mustafa Kemal criticised Ali Fuat Paşa due to his guerrilla uniform. Some of the military men were affected by the Bolsheviks ideas at them time; they did not prefer to wear their military rank on their uniforms. As a head of the western front Ali Fuat also did not wear his military ranks which Mustafa Kemal argues that surprised him when they met in Ankara. However, Mustafa Kemal did not hesitate to send Ali Fuat to Moscow to negotiate with Bolsheviks. Atatürk, *Nutuk*. 52. However, Ali Fuat Paşa rejects this claim and he also emphasize that Mustafa Kemal distorted the facts. see Ali Fuat Cebesoy, *Bilinmeyen Hatıralar /*, Gözden geçirilmiş genişletilmiş 2.baskı, Temel Yayınları ; (İstanbul : Temel, 2005). 447, 450.

⁴⁶⁰ Cebesoy, *Milli Mücadele Hâtıraları*, 582.

⁴⁶¹ Cebesoy, *Bilinmeyen Hatıralar*, 445-446.

station, and he expressed his surprise at the decision. In his little known memoirs '*Bilinmeyen Hatıralar*', Ali Fuat Paşa claims that he already felt an era of single man rule had begun in Ankara. According to Ali Fuat Paşa, those who had recently come to Ankara; i.e. those who came to Ankara after Istanbul had been occupied by the British in 16 March 1920, that helped Mustafa Kemal establish single man rule in the country, by dividing up old friends.⁴⁶² It was obvious to Ali Fuat Paşa at this point that Mustafa Kemal's intention was to send him away from the front and Anatolia.

Mustafa Kemal also chose to send Ethem and his brothers to Moscow along with Ali Fuat Paşa. Ethem and his brothers had no diplomatic career backgrounds, which Mustafa Kemal already knew. They were men of arms rather than men of politics or diplomacy. Mustafa Kemal was aware of Ethem and his brothers' personalities and background. So we can question what his aim was in sending Ethem to Moscow. Possibly, to make him second secretary to Ali Fuat Paşa? Thus, it is apparent; his strategy was to eradicate potential problems efficiently by sending opponents abroad. However, for Ethem and his brothers, leaving the front was not readily accepted. They had been at the front from the beginning of the Greek occupation in May 1919. At that time, İsmet (İnönü) had been in Istanbul, which was under de facto occupation from the British (November 1918);⁴⁶³ meanwhile, Mustafa Kemal was occupied with local and regional congresses in the Black Sea region.

Mustafa Kemal determined that the Western front would be divided into two parts: a Western and Southern one. While İsmet (İnönü) became Commander of the Western front, Refet (Bele) became commander of the Southern one. According to his plan, Çerkes Ethem's *Kuva-yi Seyyare* would serve under the Kütahya branch of the Western front. This meant the *Kuva-yi Seyyare*, with its irregular forces, would become a sub-unit of the

⁴⁶² Ibid.446.

⁴⁶³ İsmet moved to Ankara to join the movement in April 1920, after the assembly was opened. He was also criticized that he did not join the Anatolian movement from the beginning, or his move to Ankara.

regular army.⁴⁶⁴ Ethem's older brother Tevfik disagreed with the decision made in Ankara, and refused to serve under a regular military unit in Kütahya.⁴⁶⁵ Ethem and his brothers, especially Tevfik, were also against the appointment of Refet Paşa (Bele) to the front. The reason for their opposition was that Ethem and Refet had personal problems from the time of the Yozgat/Çapanoğlu incident. If we recollect events we can observe, that after he had suppressed disorder in Yozgat, a group of armed Alevis from Yozgat then joined Ethem's forces at the Western front.⁴⁶⁶ However, Refet Paşa threatened the local Alevis of Yozgat after Ethem had quelled the disorder. This situation caused problems among Ethem's forces, with Alevi soldiers leaving the front and declaring that if they would not be pardoned for their activities in the Yozgat incident, there would be no reason for them to join the nationalist forces. For this reason, Ethem tried to send Refet Paşa to the military court in Eskişehir, alleging that he had caused the desertion of soldiers from the military front.⁴⁶⁷ However, this created a further problem between Mustafa Kemal and Ethem, since Refet was the Minister of Interior in Mustafa Kemal's government. Consequently, Ethem's attempt was prevented by Mustafa Kemal.

At the beginning of the Anatolian movement, there was no proper working state structure in Anatolia. The central government, which was in Istanbul, was unable to rule the empire effectively. With the opening of the assembly in Ankara in April 1920, a central authority was finally beginning to re-emerge. Until the assembly opened, in the period between 1919 and 1920, Ethem was fighting against both the Greeks troops at the Western front and suppressing the anti-nationalist movements in Central and Western Anatolia.⁴⁶⁸ A single year had not passed since the opening of the assembly, which brought about an increase in Ankara's military and financial power, before a struggle

⁴⁶⁴ Özalp, *Milli Mücadele 1. Cilt 1919-1922.*, 166-167.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid. 167.

⁴⁶⁶ Çerkes Ethem, *Anılarım* (İstanbul: Berfin Yayınları, 2005), 110.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid. 110.

⁴⁶⁸ Şener, *Çerkes Ethem Olayı*.163-164.

began to emerge, which made irregular forces appear an unsustainable option for Mustafa Kemal. In November 1920, he no longer saw such a need for irregulars, as he had in the opening days of the assembly in April 1920. In late November, a new struggle began between Mustafa Kemal's and Ethem's circles, especially between İsmet and Tevfik, the latter of whom was responsible for the *Kuva-yi Seyyare* on behalf of Ethem. İsmet was the Commander of the Western front, and Ethem's youngest brother, Tevfik, was his representative at the Western front. İsmet tried to take control of Tevfik; however, Tevfik did not consent to accept İsmet as a senior commander. İsmet sent a detachment with a lieutenant colonel, who prepared notices against the leaders of the *Kuva-yi Seyyare*.⁴⁶⁹ Tevfik sent them back to İsmet, declaring that he would no longer accept İsmet as a senior commander.⁴⁷⁰ İsmet and Mustafa Kemal sought a way to control the *Kuva-yi Seyyare*, as they had other 'regular divisions', since Ethem and his irregular forces were becoming a threat to the Ankara government, interrupting the political business. İsmet demanded the official military reports of the *Kuva-yi Seyyare*, to regulate it.⁴⁷¹ İsmet also aimed to control the *Kuva-yi Seyyare* at the front, and prevent their political intervention in the assembly. It was also declared that the *Kuva-yi Seyyare* should focus on enemy troops only, and nothing behind the front.⁴⁷² However, Tevfik opposed İsmet's plan to make the *Kuva-yi Seyyare* a regular force, emphasising that their forces consisted of 'good-for-nothings' '*seraseriler*', whom he believed would never be able to serve as a regular force since they were also illiterate. He suggested they should either continue as an irregular force or be disbanded.⁴⁷³ He also refused to send military reports pertaining to his forces to İsmet in Kütahya, choosing to send reports directly to Mustafa Kemal in Ankara.

⁴⁶⁹ Çerkes Ethem, *Anılarım*, 117.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid. 117.

⁴⁷¹ 27 November 1920. *Harp Tarihi Belgeleri Dergisi*, year 24, issue 73, September 1975, Document no 1574, 8-9.

⁴⁷² Özalp, *Milli Mücadele 1. Cilt 1919-1922*. 167.

⁴⁷³ *Harp Tarihi Belgeleri Dergisi*, year 24, issue 73, September 1975, Document no 1574, 8-9.

6- Bilecik Meetings

Ethem was invited by Mustafa Kemal to Ankara to meet with representatives of the Istanbul government.⁴⁷⁴ However, it is worth noting that these meetings were in Bilecik, which was about 80 km from Eskişehir, and 350 km from Ankara in the Northwest of Anatolia. Ethem was in Kütahya at this time, which was also next to Eskişehir (about 75 km from Eskişehir and 350 km from Ankara). He also had to pass through Eskişehir to go to Ankara. The question raised here is what Mustafa Kemal was planning to do with his invitation to Ankara before travelling to Bilecik for negotiations. Ethem was not accustomed to having regular diplomatic meetings; as he was a paramilitary force leader. To solve the issues between İsmet and Tevfik, Mustafa Kemal moved to Eskişehir with Ethem, Reşit, Kazım, Kılıç Ali, Celal, Hakkı Behiç and Şükrü Beys. According to Kazım Özalp, when travelling on the train, Ethem had more armed people in his group than usual during the trip.⁴⁷⁵ Some counter measures were also taken against Ethem.⁴⁷⁶ Mustafa Kemal brought 50 guards with him,⁴⁷⁷ including Topal Osman ('Osman the cripple') his personal guard, who brought an extended armed group with him. Topal was one of Mustafa Kemal's best-known and most ruthless guards at the time. His presence on this journey is therefore significant. Ethem expected that Mustafa Kemal might try to organise an attack against him.⁴⁷⁸ Indeed, in their memoirs, both Mustafa Kemal and Ethem accused one another of organising an armed attack against the other one.

When the train arrived at the station in Eskişehir, two officers greeted Ethem. The officers provided some information about the regular army's on-going preparations in

⁴⁷⁴ The meeting was hold in December 5, 1920. See the details Oğuz AYTEPE, "Milli Mücadele'de Bilecik Görüşmesi," *Ankara Üniversitesi Türk İnkılâp Tarihi Enstitüsü Atatürk Yolu Dergisi*, no. 33-34 (May - November 2004): 23-31.

⁴⁷⁵ Özalp, *Milli Mücadele 1. Cilt 1919-1922*, 168.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid, 168.

⁴⁷⁷ Çerkes Ethem, *Anılarım*, 122.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid. 124-126.

Eskişehir. They feared that some military units were being transferred to Eskişehir.⁴⁷⁹ The plan, according to Ethem, was that he would be killed by Eskişehir–Bilecik on the train journey. The regular army units were being readied in Eskişehir to counter possible riots by the people of Eskişehir.⁴⁸⁰ Ethem felt that the troop activity was directed against him personally, and prepared a counter–attack at the Eskişehir station. Ethem used his sickness as an excuse to leave the train, to rest in a house close to the station. Except for Mustafa Kemal, all the other members of the committee also left the train. However, due to suspicions over possible preparations by Ethem, Mustafa Kemal chose not to stay in the station, moving towards Bilecik with the train, without waiting for members of the committee to return.⁴⁸¹

The lack of trust on both sides, described above, heightened expectation of an armed conflict in Eskişehir, when Mustafa Kemal and İsmet arrived there. On this occasion Ethem left Eskişehir for Kütahya, since he believed that he was not secure there. Diyarbakır MP Hacı Şükrü Bey, who was also on the train with Mustafa Kemal, went to Kütahya with Ethem Bey. He explained that in a secret session of the assembly, Ethem conveyed his suspicions about the Ankara government, citing the military mobilisation in Eskişehir, as battalion 61 had been moved there. Ethem thought that this was one component of preparations being made against him by Mustafa Kemal.⁴⁸² In his memoir, Ethem confirmed that he suspected military preparations were being made against Mustafa Kemal in Eskişehir, and that this meant an assassination plot. When Mustafa Kemal returned from Bilecik, the MPs who came from Ankara with him came together, and decided that Reşit, Ethem’s older brother, would go with Kazım Bey to Kütahya to

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid. 122-123.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid. 124.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid. 126.

⁴⁸² “The Secret Session Records of the Grand National Assembly, Secret Session.” 111, 09.12.1336 (1920), 258, <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/GZC/d01/CILT01/gcz01001111.pdf>. Accessed 23/08/2015.

meet with Ethem.⁴⁸³ Following the meeting in Kütahya, Ethem agreed with Kazım Bey to serve under him at the Western front as an army commander. However, he spoke against Refet Bey's appointment to the Southern Front as commander there. From the perspective of Ankara, it was considered contrary to military discipline to change a military commander based on a paramilitary leader's opinion.⁴⁸⁴

Superficially, it appears that the disagreement between Tevfik Bey and İsmet Bey was on the grounds of military strategy, and Tevfik Bey's refusal to send reports about his military unit to İsmet Bey. However, we contend that the reason for the disagreement was not about military strategy at all. Tevfik Bey did not favour working under İsmet and Refet Beys. Indeed, he was not completely against the regular army, since he had already sent military reports to Ankara (to Mustafa Kemal). However, he had experienced problems with senior officers, İsmet and Refet Beys. The tension between Ethem Bey and the Ankara government thereby increased, as Mustafa Kemal, as head of the assembly, along with his close circle, had already decided to exclude Ethem from the armed groups, to pacify him, because he (and his brothers) could not be controlled. Mustafa Kemal would no longer work with them. Although Ethem had been useful for suppressing Anatolia's domestic incidents, during the critical period of resistance in the absence of a strong regular military, there were no longer important threats from Anatolia to the Ankara government. Now Ankara had enough military power for the regular army against the Greek forces in the western front, particularly after the war against the Armenian forces ended at the Eastern front. Some of the regular forces were later transferred to the Western front from the East. The resulting agreement with the Bolsheviks meant that Ankara would soon have sufficient financial and military power to strengthen its military.

⁴⁸³ Özalp, *Milli Mücadele 1. Cilt 1919-1922*.168.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid. 169.

Mustafa Kemal no longer required the irregular forces at the Western front. Moreover, the irregulars were already creating threatened his power.

According to Mustafa Kemal, some MPs and bureaucrats directed too much attention towards Ethem in Ankara. Ethem became extremely confident under the attentions of the people,⁴⁸⁵ encouraging the opponents of Mustafa Kemal to use Ethem against him. They tried to balance Mustafa Kemal's power with that of Ethem. However, before Ethem came to the assembly, he had not been involved in any collusion. Despite the continued armed confrontation against Greek forces and the civil war in Anatolia, there was extensive political struggle within the assembly. The composition of the political assembly was diverse; including ulemas, bureaucrats, senior military officers, and local notables. Thus, a great many different elements of society were represented in the assembly. This diversity made governing the assembly challenging, complicating the process of arriving at concrete decisions; MPs themselves were generally striving to save the empire and the sultanate from Greek and Allied occupation.

Nationalist officers successfully used bandits and irregular armed groups at the beginning of the resistance against Greek occupation. The nationalists did not see the crimes committed by the bandits and irregulars, or the releasing of convicts from jails by irregular forces as problematic.⁴⁸⁶ However, when the relationship between Ankara and Ethem became uneasy, Ankara began to find 'excuses' to justify its exclusion of Ethem from the front. Complaints were flowing in about Ethem and his brother Tevfik, specifically in relation to their discretionary hanging of anti-nationalists. Although Ethem and his brothers worked hand in glove with Ankara for more than six months, for the first time, on 24 December 1920, Ankara took complaints about Ethem's acts of insubordination seriously. These included his refusal to accept the verdicts of military

⁴⁸⁵ Atatürk, *Nutuk*, volume 2, 27.

⁴⁸⁶ Şener, *Çerkes Ethem Olayı*.47.

tribunals and lack of acceptance of the authority of the central government.⁴⁸⁷ Although the Ankara government also took harsh measurements and used independent courts to 'deal with' opposition, Mustafa Kemal criticised Ethem for hanging people after only a short trial, without recourse to independent courts for approval.⁴⁸⁸ It is important to note that there was already a plan on paper to prove Ethem's disobedience to Ankara, and as Mustafa Kemal's political and military power grew, he increasingly believed that if the army could defeat Ethem's forces, then no one in Ankara would question his decisions or make his job difficult. On 27th December, the cabinet declared that Ethem and his brother Tevfik had violated the assembly's authority through their actions.⁴⁸⁹

From the end of November 1920 onwards, both sides increasingly expressed doubt about the activities of the other side. However, they chose not to display their distrust for each other. Kind language was used in the correspondence from both sides. However, intra group correspondence demonstrates that the confidence between the two groups had already broken down. According to İsmet (who informed Ankara), Ethem was seeking to gather all irregular nationalist forces around his own troops so that he would be in a position to attempt to take control over the assembly with Bolshevist ideas.⁴⁹⁰ İsmet's forces were also ready to attack Ethem's *Kuva-yi Seyyare*.⁴⁹¹ Mustafa Kemal

⁴⁸⁷ 24 December 1920. (24/12/36). *Harp Tarihi Belgeleri Dergisi*, year 24, issue 73, September 1975, Document no 1582, 38.

⁴⁸⁸ "The Secret Session Records of the Grand National Assembly, Secret Session." 125, 29.12.1336 (1920), 281. <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/GZC/d01/CILT01/gcz01001125.pdf>. accessed 23/08/2015. On 15 February 1336 (1920), members of local group of Marmara town of Akhisar were arrested by the local gendarme forces, however, later on gendarme station was raided by Ethem and local bandits were executed by shooting BOA.DH.KMS. 53-4/32, 12 February 1336 (1920). It has to be mentioned that in the document Ethem's name recorded as 'Çerkes Ethem' some claim that Çerkes were put his name after he was split up with Mustafa Kemal to suppress the all Circassians in the republican Turkey, however, a year before his exclusion from Ankara his name already recorded as Çerkes Ethem. It meant that he was already known as Çerkes Ethem.

⁴⁸⁹ 27 December 1920. (27/12/36). *Harp Tarihi Belgeleri Dergisi*, year 24, issue 73, September 1975, Document no 1585, 50.

⁴⁹⁰ 7 December 1920. (7/12/36). *Harp Tarihi Belgeleri Dergisi*, year 24, issue 73, September 1975, Document no 1576, 16.

⁴⁹¹ 7 December 1920. (7/12/36). *Harp Tarihi Belgeleri Dergisi*, year 24, issue 73, September 1975, Document no 1576, 17.

argued in his reply that while the activities in the assembly were controlled, *Kuva-yi Seyyare* still had the ability to recruit people from the Western front.

However, on December 23, a group of MPs moved from Ankara to Kütahya to negotiate with Ethem regarding the problems between himself and Ankara.⁴⁹² Mustafa Kemal did not support the idea that a delegation should meet with Ethem. However, under pressure from MPs in the assembly, he agreed to send a council to Kütahya to meet with Ethem, in order to negotiate. The council reported on Ethem and Tevfik's demands; including on the policy that Refet and Fahrettin Bey should be removed from the front, and that the local government should pay for their expenses incurred at the front, while the brothers swore not to act against the regular forces if they did not attack them.⁴⁹³

After receiving the report, Mustafa Kemal, thought that the members of the delegation had been arrested by Ethem and had been coerced into sending the reports. Although it should be noted that the reports did not include any unacceptable demands. The delegation was not thinking in the same way as Mustafa Kemal and İsmet. Their aim was only to try to reconcile the *Kuva-yi Seyyare* with Ankara. In the assembly, moreover, the majority of the MPs did not favour a military attack on the Circassian brothers. Mustafa Kemal expected the delegation to share his ideas. Without waiting for their return to Ankara, Mustafa Kemal chose to end the problem and fight Ethem. Despite his position as head of the assembly, Mustafa Kemal believed that they did not need to inform the assembly of any impending military attack. If the attack were to succeed he believed he would receive Ethem's approval, and that the assembly would agree as he already had sufficient evidence to convince its members.⁴⁹⁴ The delegation was however disappointed

⁴⁹² Celal, Kılıç Ali, Eyüp Sabri, Vehip and Ethem's brother Reşit was in the council. MK Atatürk, Nutuk, p. 75.

⁴⁹³ Atatürk, *Nutuk*.76-77.

⁴⁹⁴ 27 December 1920. (27/12/36). *Harp Tarihi Belgeleri Dergisi*, year 24, issue 73, September 1975, Document no 1584, 47.

by the approach taken by the cabinet regarding their reports and its reaction to their suggestions to solving the problems noted.⁴⁹⁵

Mustafa Kemal, in his own memoir, the *Nutuk*, added some documents at the end about the incident to push forward his own version of the story. The documents suggested that Mustafa Kemal was seeking a way to solve the problem without causing an armed conflict. Then, on the 26th of December 1920, Mustafa Kemal sent a telegram to İsmet informing him that he was thinking of explaining every point to the assembly. On December 28th, he sent a telegram to the delegation, informing them that the problem would be spoken about at government level, and that the decision would be taken by the government.⁴⁹⁶ However, in one document dated 27th December 1920, not present in Mustafa Kemal's *Nutuk*, but which can be found in the Journal of Military History Documents (an official journal of the Turkish Armed Forces), we see that Mustafa Kemal had sent a telegram to İsmet, arguing that he did not believe the problem could be resolved peacefully. Therefore, he explained his military plan to İsmet and Refet.⁴⁹⁷ It is noteworthy that Mustafa Kemal supported a military attack, but chose not to include the documents showing his resolve to handle the problem alone using military power in his memoirs.

Two days later, during negotiations in the assembly sessions, Mustafa Kemal almost convinced the other MPs of the need for a military solution to the *Kuva-yi Seyyare* (December 30th).⁴⁹⁸ However, despite Ethem's declaration,⁴⁹⁹ and after the delegation had informed the MPs about their meetings with Ethem and his brothers, the MPs agreed they

⁴⁹⁵ Atatürk, *Nutuk*.78,79.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid, 77 - 79.

⁴⁹⁷ *Harp Tarihi Belgeleri Dergisi*, year 24, issue 73, September 1975, Document no 1975, 47.

⁴⁹⁸ 30 December 1920. (30/12/36). *Harp Tarihi Belgeleri Dergisi*, year 24, issue 73, September 1975, Document no 1587, 56.

⁴⁹⁹ Ethem send a telegram by accusing the MP's as they worked just for their own benefits. The Secret Session Records of the Grand National Assembly, Secret Session 111. 09/12/1336 (1920) 261, the date of the telegram 5.1.1337(1921)
<https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/GZC/d01/CILT01/gcz01001111.pdf> Accessed 23/08/2015.

were not in favour of fighting the *Kuva-yi Seyyare*. Mustafa Kemal's willingness to use force against Ethem and his men was contrary to the general opinion of the MPs, which was to avoid 'spilling Muslim blood' '*Müslüman kanı dökmek*' in the country.⁵⁰⁰ As a result of negotiations in the assembly, and as a final offer to Ethem and his brothers, Mustafa Kemal informed Refet and İsmet that they should notify Ethem that if they were to leave the *Kuva-yi Seyyare* their lives would be guaranteed and the assembly would request a pardon in the courts.⁵⁰¹ A day after Mustafa Kemal's telegram to Refet and İsmet, Refet sent a telegram to Mustafa Kemal informing him that he was continuing his military preparations against the *Kuva-yi Seyyare*. He then prepared his unit and pushed some of his cavalry forward to facilitate the attack.⁵⁰²

It is worth pointing out that Ethem attempted to open a place for himself in the anti-nationalist camp. He stated to the members of the Istanbul government, such as Ali Kemal that the country could not continue to pursue a war agenda any longer. It is significant to emphasise here, that, although Ethem was seen as no more than a leader of bandits, Ethem's position changed in response to circumstances. He was one of the first to organise local resistance against the Greeks in western Anatolia, and many people were hanged by his forces, due to their opposition to the nationalist cause. However, after he began to fear he would be excluded from the national movement, he adopted an anti-nationalist rhetoric.⁵⁰³ Ethem sent a telegram to the assembly to protest the holding of Istanbul government members taken by the Ankara government after the Bilecik meeting. He demanded their release, criticising the members of the Ankara government for

⁵⁰⁰ "The Secret Session Records of the Grand National Assembly, Secret Session." 126, 30.12.1336 (1920), 294-296 <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/GZC/d01/CILT01/gcz01001126.pdf> Accessed 23/08/2015.

⁵⁰¹ 30 December 1920. (30/12/36). *Harp Tarihi Belgeleri Dergisi*, year 24, issue 73, September 1975, Document no 1587, 56.

⁵⁰² 31 December 1920. (31/12/36). *Harp Tarihi Belgeleri Dergisi*, year 24, issue 73, September 1975, Document no 1589, 62.

⁵⁰³ "The Secret Session Records of the Grand National Assembly, Secret Session." 123, 27/12/1336 (1920) 270, the date of the telegram 27.12.1336 (1920), <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/GZC/d01/CILT01/gcz01001123.pdf> Accessed 23/08/2015.

increasing their own salaries.⁵⁰⁴ It could be said that Ethem sent this telegram to Ankara to gain the support of the Istanbul government and the palace, since his relationship had already deteriorated with the Ankara government.

Celal Bey also mentioned in his assembly speech that when the delegation met Ethem and his brother in Kütahya, military equipment and soldiers belonging to the Ankara government had been moved to Kütahya from Eskişehir via train. This consignment concerned Ethem and his men, and indicated to them that it could mark the commencement of Ankara's military operation against them.⁵⁰⁵ It was also emphasised in the speech that *Kuva-yi Seyyare* forces did not wish to fight against Ankara's forces. Meanwhile, the preparation continued among İsmet Paşa's unit in Kütahya. According to Celal Bey, İsmet Paşa was also concerned about the situation. However, he claimed there was no option besides the military one if Ethem and his brothers chose not to leave the military units.⁵⁰⁶ Celal also believed that both sides were exaggerating the situation for personal reasons. It is also important to mention that details concerning the end of the session were completely absent from the assembly records. Thus, it is not clear how the session concluded.⁵⁰⁷

After the meeting, İsmet Bey asked Ethem to leave his forces along with his brother Tevfik. He also stated that he had sufficient military forces to deploy against him.⁵⁰⁸ In his reply, Ethem accused İsmet and Mustafa Kemal of selfishness. He also blamed his brother Reşit Bey, arguing that it was due to Reşit's naivety that İsmet and Mustafa Kemal had been given an opportunity to lead the nationalist cause, arguing that

⁵⁰⁴ The Secret Session Records of the Grand National Assembly, Secret Session 111. 09/12/1336 (1920) 261, the date of the telegram 5.1.1337(1921)
<https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/GZC/d01/CILT01/gcz01001111.pdf> Accessed 23/08/2015.

⁵⁰⁵ "The Secret Session Records of the Grand National Assembly, Secret Session." 126, 30.12.1336 (1920), 292, <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/GZC/d01/CILT01/gcz01001126.pdf> Accessed 23/08/2015.

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid. 293.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid. 305.

⁵⁰⁸ Uzun, "Milli Mücadele'de Çerkez Ethem ve Kuva-Yı Seyyare'nin Faaliyetleri (1919–1920)." 171.

he would have fought them to prevent their emergence as leaders.⁵⁰⁹ Mustafa Kemal planned that Refet Bey, the head of the Southern Front army, would attack the *Kuva-yi Seyyare* with all his forces, and would also begin a propaganda campaign to break the unity binding the *Kuva-yi Seyyare* units together.⁵¹⁰ Mustafa Kemal already thought that the *Kuva-yi Seyyare* might not wish to fight against the regular army. In this case, the Southern and Western front of the regular cavalries would then be expected to attack and pursue them.⁵¹¹ İsmet Bey had been ordered by Mustafa Kemal to move to Kütahya in a coded telegram. İsmet informed Ethem that they should move to Gediz.⁵¹² Ethem would then either remain in Kütahya and confront İsmet's forces, or he would move to Gediz as İsmet had told him, where he would be squeezed between İsmet's forces and the Greek troops. Ethem's aide de camp, Lieutenant Sami, claimed that Ethem's aim was to capture Ankara, to eliminate the assembly and to execute its executives and then reorganise the assembly and the army to fight against the Greeks.⁵¹³ When the military attack was carried out by the regular army, however, Ethem avoided joining in. He withdrew his troops to the Gediz region without resisting the incoming army.⁵¹⁴ He declared to the *Kuva-yi Seyyare* that there was no longer an opportunity for them to continue working together. They had three options, they could either join the regular forces (Ankara), join the Greek Forces, or live as bandits in the mountains.⁵¹⁵ Ethem did not force his forces to follow

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid. 172.

⁵¹⁰ 27 December 1920. (27/12/36). *Harp Tarihi Belgeleri Dergisi*, year 24, issue 73, September 1975, Document no 1584, 47.

⁵¹¹ 27 December 1920. (27/12/36). *Harp Tarihi Belgeleri Dergisi*, year 24, issue 73, September 1975, Document no 1584, 47.

⁵¹² "The Secret Session Records of the Grand National Assembly, Secret Session." 126, 30.12.1336 (1920), 292, <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/GZC/d01/CILT01/gcz01001126.pdf> Accessed 23/08/2015.

⁵¹³ Form lieutenant Sami and the governor Demirci İbrahim Ethem's meeting which was held on 13 January 1921. See İbrahim Ethem Akıncı, *Demirci Akıncıları*, Yayınlar (Ankara : Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1978)., 25.

⁵¹⁴ Atatürk, *Nutuk*.80. Miralay Mehmet Arif Bey, *Anadolu İnkılabı (Mücadele-I Milliye Hatıratı 1335-1339)*, ed. Bülent Demirbaş (İstanbul: Arba, 1987), 58.

⁵¹⁵ 23 January 1921. (23/02/37). *Harp Tarihi Belgeleri Dergisi*, year 24, issue 73, September 1975, Document no 1593, 76.

him. He himself preferred to go into hiding in the Greek occupied zone.⁵¹⁶ It can be asserted that Ethem's decision to dissolve his forces prevented a civil war between his forces and Ankara. Kazım Özalp also states that after the military attack began, a group of officers and soldiers joined their side. Another group from Ethem's forces did not fight choosing to go into the mountains.⁵¹⁷

After Ethem withdrew to Gediz, the regular troops attacked them. His forces were caught in the crossfire between the regular army and Greek forces. He then demanded a ceasefire from the Greeks,⁵¹⁸ and after they agreed, Ethem attacked İsmet's regular forces. İsmet then withdrew to Kütahya from Gediz on January 6th, 1921.⁵¹⁹ Ethem continued his attack on İsmet until the Greek forces began their attack. The Greek forces then moved towards Gediz. Around Gediz, Refet's regular forces, which had passed over the Greek troops now attacked Ethem,⁵²⁰ leading him to decide to defect to the Greeks. His plan was to scatter his unit; he would move into the mountains with 50-60 of his armed men. From there, he would move further inside Anatolia,⁵²¹ where eventually due to an illness he was hidden in a Circassian village (*Eski Manyas/ Soğuksu*) in a Turkish family's house around Susurluk.⁵²² Initially, Ethem did not favour joining the Greeks contrary to his brothers, Tevfik and Reşit, but ultimately, they also joined the Greeks.

After the military operation commenced against Ethem and his forces, Mustafa Kemal sought to justify the military attack. He blamed Ethem and his brothers for trying to establish a feudal structure (*Derebeylik*) under their control in the Kütahya, Afyon and Isparta regions.⁵²³ He alleged that they also aimed to replace the assembly with a new one

⁵¹⁶ 23 January 1921. (23/02/37). *Harp Tarihi Belgeleri Dergisi*, year 24, issue 73, September 1975, Document no 1593, 76.

⁵¹⁷ Özalp, *Milli Mücadele I. Cilt 1919-1922*.170.

⁵¹⁸ Çerkes Ethem, *Anılarım*.141.

⁵¹⁹ Ibid. 143.

⁵²⁰ Ibid. 148-150.

⁵²¹ Ibid. 155.

⁵²² Ibid. 148-150.

⁵²³ The Open Session Records of the Grand National Assembly, Open Session 131, 8/1/1337 (1921), 225, <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/TBMM/d01/c007/tbmm01007131.pdf> and "The Secret Session Records of the Grand National Assembly, Secret Session." 125, 29/12/1336 (1920), 286,

under their own control. Mustafa Kemal claimed that they then worked alone for their own benefit. Moreover, he claimed they had tried to influence the Bolsheviks, to organise a Bolshevik uprising in Eskişehir.⁵²⁴ While demolishing Ethem and his brothers' reputation in nationalist circles, Mustafa Kemal utilised black propaganda in the assembly. He went further in his claims arguing that Ethem and his brothers had tried to collaborate with the Bolsheviks, the Greeks, the Istanbul government and even the British.⁵²⁵ However, only a month before this speech, Ethem had been in Ankara. Although trust had broken down between Ethem and Mustafa Kemal, there had been attempts to seek a solution to the problems between Tevfik and İsmet at that time. However, now Ethem was simply declared a collaborator.

To cut all ties between Ethem and his forces a declaration was published by Western front commanders calling on Ethem's irregular forces not to fight against the Ankara governments forces; this call used Islamic rhetoric and referred to Ethem as having been 'Greekified'.⁵²⁶ It was also ordered by the Ankara government's Ministry of War that, in response to Ethem's impact on the Circassians of the Tokat, Sivas, Kayseri regions, they should be observed closely by military intelligence to prevent possible support emerging from the region for Ethem.⁵²⁷ In the same session, MPs voted to remove Reşit Bey from his deputyship in the assembly.⁵²⁸ On January 24 1921, Mustafa Kemal declared that Ethem had ceased to be of concern.⁵²⁹

<https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/GZC/d01/CILT01/gcz01001125.pdf> Accessed 23/08/2015.

⁵²⁴ The Open Session Records of the Grand National Assembly, Open Session 131, 8/1/1337 (1921), 227, <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/TBMM/d01/c007/tbmm01007131.pdf> Accessed 23/08/2015.

⁵²⁵ Ibid. 227.

⁵²⁶ ATASE.İSH. 945/152, 7/ Kanunisani (January)/ 1337 (1921).

⁵²⁷ ATASE.İSH. 770/35,35aa. 19/1/1337 (1921).

⁵²⁸ The Open Session Records of the Grand National Assembly, Open Session 131, 8/1/1337 (1921), 227, <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/TBMM/d01/c007/tbmm01007131.pdf> Accessed 23/08/2015, 228.

⁵²⁹ The Secret Session Records of the Grand National Assembly, Secret Session 137, 24.1.1337 (1921), 353, <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/GZC/d01/CILT01/gcz01001137.pdf> Accessed 23/08/2015.

Conclusion

1920 has been described in this chapter as an especially difficult year for the Ankara government, since domestic problems and the civil war in Anatolia had made it difficult for it to fight against Greek and Allied occupation forces. On the one hand, the regular army had not been as strong as the anti-nationalist forces. As we have seen, the Anzavur, Adapazarı-Düzce and Yozgat incidents seriously threatened Ankara's existence. On the other hand, Çerkes Ethem, as a leading irregular force leader at the time, had preserved Ankara from many disastrous outcomes. However, towards the end of the year, Ankara (or Mustafa Kemal) expanded its authority over the country both militarily and in terms of government policy. Order was restored to the areas surrounding Ankara, and Ethem was no longer as valuable as he had been previously. Thus, the time arrived for Mustafa Kemal and İsmet (İnönü) to ensure they had control over him. This situation provided an opening for the opposition to strengthen his military and political power, although Ethem had not strived for this. Ultimately, Mustafa Kemal and İsmet succeeded in their objective to exclude him from the nationalist cause, forcing him into the Greek occupied zone by January 1921.

Chapter Five

The Circassian Congress, Bandits and the Gönen-Manyas Deportations

Introduction

The days following the exclusion of Çerkes Ethem from the national movement saw anti-nationalist Circassians take new steps to oppose the Kemalists in İzmir. They had collaborated with occupiers to establish a semi-autonomous structure within the Greek occupied zone. The members of the group were not a monolithic bloc. They had already fought each other during the Düzce-Adapazarı and Anzavur incidents. However, now they had a common enemy in the Kemalists. Among the members of the group, there was a variety of people from different backgrounds. They included ex-members of the Ottoman Special Organisation, bureaucrats, members of the Committee of Union and Progress, and its opposition, the Liberal Entente, Ottoman officials and bandits. All were now members of the Association for the Strengthening of Near Eastern Circassians Rights (ASNEC, *Şark-ı Karip Çerkesleri Temin-i Hukuk Cemiyeti*), and included participants from the Circassian Congress held in İzmir (October 1921).

In the year after the congress, the Ankara government exiled 14 Circassian villages in the Gönen-Manyas region to central and eastern parts of Turkey. The reason for this exile was to regain control over the region. In the days following the defeat of Greek forces in Western Anatolia (final battles were fought between the 26th August and 9th September 1922); Circassian bandits seemed to remain the only, although a grave threat to the Ankara government. It was against this backdrop that the government took the decision to exile fourteen Circassian villages, which can be likened to a collective punishment for them. They were exiled because of the presence of Circassian bandits in the region, and the government also intended to deport all other dozens of Circassian villages from the region, to cut off the supply of human resources. Some of the villages

were exiled because some of their inhabitants were known to have joined armed groups; yet not all the members of the civilian population supported these groups. The only crime that they had committed, if it can be considered a crime at all, was coming from the same villages as the some of the bandits. Ankara proposed to end the alleged chaos in the region by removing the Circassian villages entirely from the region.

This chapter will examine the motivation behind those anti-nationalist Circassians establishing an association, seeking Greek support and declaring their independence from both the nationalist government of Ankara and the Ottoman government of Istanbul. This chapter will also study the armed Circassian opposition. As a response to noted declarations and opposition movements, a collective punishment for the Circassians was applied by the Ankara government. This involved deporting them from the Gönen-Manyas region to Central and Eastern Anatolia, something discussed in the third section of this chapter. This chapter argues that the tense Turkish-Greek War in Western Anatolia (1919-1922) convinced the Ankara government that it would be nearly impossible for it to control the region, and thus it sought extremely harsh methods to deal with the Circassians. This culminated in 4,000 deportations from the region. As a result of this overreaction, and the associated collective punishment, many women, children and innocent people in the region became victims.

1 - The Emergence of the Idea of Autonomy and the Circassian Congress

A) Governorship of (Çule) İbrahim Hakkı in İzmit from April 1920 to June 1921

Çule İbrahim Hakkı Bey was an opponent of the CUP even during the pre-WWI period, having been implicated in the assassination of Mahmud Şevket Paşa in 1913.⁵³⁰ Due to increasing pressure from the CUP, he had to leave the empire for Egypt, where he built a good relationship with the British, explaining why he was also known as İbrahim the English (İngiliz İbrahim).⁵³¹ With the signing of the Mudros armistice (1918) he returned to the empire, and was appointed as governor of İzmit by Damad Ferid Paşa, where he remained from April 1920 to June 1921. He was a CUP opponent, as were the majority of the bureaucrats in the post-WWI period, appointed by the Istanbul government. The division between the CUP and the Liberal Party stemmed from the pre-WWI period, when multi-party elections were first established in the empire. Later, in 1913, the CUP dominated in terms of its political power, carrying out a military coup in Istanbul. İbrahim later returned from Egypt after WWI, when he was appointed governor of İzmit in 1920. From the beginning of the British and Greek occupation, İbrahim Hakkı had a warm relationship with the British. Indeed, a British officer in İzmit also considered him a friend.⁵³²

The idea of autonomy came to the fore for İbrahim Hakkı when the Ottoman Porte⁵³³ lost control over the İzmit region in June 1921. The region was then taken over by the Ankara government's forces. From April 1920 to June 1921 Çule İbrahim Hakkı

⁵³⁰ Sadrazam Mahmut Şevket Paşa was killed in 11 June 1913. After his murder, the CUP used this killing to silence the opposition in the empire. A significant number of military men and bureaucrats were retired or exiled to the peripheries of the empire by the CUP. See Ali Birinci, *Hürriyet ve İtilaf*. 229.

⁵³¹ Sefer Berzeg, *Türkiye Kurtuluş Savaşı'nda Çerkes Göçmenleri (II)* (İstanbul: Nart Yayıncılık, 1990), 42-43. He had to leave the empire in the days following of the assassination of Mahmut Şevket Paşa due to his participation to the assassination. (Interview with Baki Çule, in 18 April 2015, Düzce. Baki Çule is the grandson of İbrahim Hakkı's brother Arslan Bey).

⁵³² PRO/FO 608/113, 21 August 1919, document no 332.

⁵³³ Porte means 'gate' in French. It (the monumental entrance gate of the Ottoman Government Departments in Istanbul) symbolizes the Ottoman Government.

Bey was the governor of İzmit,⁵³⁴ and his activities there disturbed even the Istanbul government. Due to his warm relationships with the British, the Istanbul government tried unsuccessfully on a number of occasions to remove him from power. Indeed, the Ministry of Interior of the Ottoman government even requested the permission of the British High Commissioner to remove İbrahim Hakkı from İzmit.⁵³⁵ The Commissioner declared they were not against the decision the Ottoman government had made about İbrahim Hakkı.⁵³⁶ Abdülvahab Bey was appointed to the position.⁵³⁷ However, he was not allowed to take the governorship of İzmit, since İbrahim Hakkı had already organised paramilitary group to secure himself and the region under his governorship.⁵³⁸ Although the British, on paper at least, allowed the Ottoman government to remove him from his position, the Ottoman government was not able to do so, or to bring him to Istanbul for trial; indeed all attempts made by the Porte resulted in failure.⁵³⁹

İbrahim Hakkı tried to create an autonomous structure to create a buffer zone between the Istanbul government and the Ankara government during his governorship. He opposed the actions of the Ankara government and did not allow its military units or supporters to live in this region. He pursued a policy that was not overly aggressive when trying to convince people to accept his anti-*Kuva-yi Milliye* move.⁵⁴⁰ He acted, in fact, rather peacefully. At the same time, since the Istanbul government had no authority in the region, public security was constantly under threat from the presence of armed bands. Even in mid-1919, he had been considering establishing his own armed group to ensure his security.⁵⁴¹ Later, at the end of 1920, after the Düzce-Adapazarı incidents, he formed

⁵³⁴ Berzeg, *Türkiye Kurtuluş Savaşı'nda Çerkes Göçmenleri (II)*, 42-43. İbrahim Hakkı Bey's wife Pakize Hanım was the granddaughter of Pertev Paşa (d. 1785-1837) and daughter of Marşan Fersah Paşa. The family had good reputation in Egypt. (Interview with Baki Çule, in 18 April 2015, Düzce).

⁵³⁵ BOA.DH.KMS. 60-1/34, document 1, 28 Kanunievvel 36 (28 December 1920).

⁵³⁶ BOA.DH.KMS. 60-1/34, document 1, 28 Kanunievvel 36 (28 December 1920).

⁵³⁷ BOA.DH.KMS. 60-1/34, document 2, 28 Kanunievvel 36 (28 December 1920).

⁵³⁸ BOA.DH.KMS. 60-2/16, document 1, 6 Kanunisani 37 (6 January 1921).

⁵³⁹ BOA.DH.KMS. 60-2/16, document 6, 29 March 1337 (29 March 1921), and BOA.DH.KMS. 60-2/16 document 5, 14 March 1337 (14 March 1921).

⁵⁴⁰ PRO/FO 371/5167 E5255/262/44. 21 April 1920, document 129.

⁵⁴¹ PRO/FO 608/113, 8 August 1919, document no 334.

an armed group consisting of Circassians who had been attacked by the nationalists during the incidents, and whose homes had been burned down.⁵⁴² It appears that those Circassians who had suffered from the nationalist attacks were purposely selected by İbrahim Hakkı in order to keep the region under his control by gaining their loyalty and support.

One of İbrahim Hakkı's local rivals was from the Maan family in the Adapazarı region. This was Maan Midhat, who described İbrahim Hakkı's policies as a kind of triple game in one letter to Sultan Vahidettin.⁵⁴³ According to him, İbrahim Hakkı juggled three groups during his governorship. The first of which was the Circassians of the region. İbrahim Hakkı followed a deceptive policy of trying to convince those Circassians who believed that İbrahim Hakkı was implementing the decisions of the Ottoman Porte and the Sultan during his governorship. However, he thereby strengthened his own authority in the region rather than that of the Ottoman government and Sultan. The second group was the British, who employed İbrahim Hakkı, since they believed that he had influence over the Circassians of the region due to the widespread anti-*Kuva-yi Milliye* movement led by the Circassians.⁵⁴⁴ The final group was the Ottoman government, which was under British control by that time. Due to the occupation of Istanbul, the Porte was unable to take any precautions preventing İbrahim Hakkı from strengthening his authority in the region.⁵⁴⁵ It noteworthy that Maan Midhat claimed the troubled relationship in the area between the Circassians and Turks would deteriorate because of İbrahim Hakkı's policies. However, the Porte and the Sultan himself believed they could influence the Circassians, believing they would gain their support, since they still had an important place in their hearts and minds.⁵⁴⁶

⁵⁴² BOA.DH.KMS. 60-1/34, document 4, 2 Kanunusani 1337 (2 January 1921).

⁵⁴³ BOA.DH.KMS. 60-1/19 document 1, 22 Teşrinisani 1336 (22 November 1920).

⁵⁴⁴ BOA.DH.KMS. 60-1/19 document 1, 22 Teşrinisani 1336 (22 November 1920).

⁵⁴⁵ BOA.DH.KMS. 60-1/19 document 1, 22 Teşrinisani 1336 (22 November 1920).

⁵⁴⁶ BOA.DH.KMS. 60-1/19 document 2, 22 Teşrinisani 1336 (22 November 1920).

After the nationalist forces attacked İzmit on 28 June 1921,⁵⁴⁷ İbrahim Hakkı and his armed group left the city. However, they were unwelcome in Istanbul due to their activities during his governorship in the region. Some of them had attacked villages in İzmit along with Greek and Armenian bandits. Therefore, a group was arrested in Istanbul upon arrival; including Maan Mustafa.⁵⁴⁸ It is still not clear whether İbrahim Hakkı remained in Istanbul or if he went straight to Midilli (Lesbos) in the Aegean Sea when he left İzmit along with Greek forces. However, one thing was obvious: his service as an Ottoman governor finished when he left İzmit. A new stage had begun in his life, with his settlement in Midilli and collaboration with Greek forces. His aim was now to mobilise the Circassian population of Western Anatolia politically. His position changed from one of a loyal Circassian subject of the Sultan to a Circassian activist/nationalist with the objective of establishing an autonomous structure in the Greek occupied zone of Anatolia. To achieve this aim, he prepared several charters, a booklet focused on ‘the Circassian nationalist movement in İzmit’ under his governorship, and several proposals for the Circassian Congress while in Midilli.⁵⁴⁹ As will be seen below, this attempt affected the lives of hundreds of Circassians rather negatively.

İbrahim claims in his writings that April 1920 was the date upon which the Circassian nationalist movement had begun. The movement had two important characteristics, its Islamic and Circassian identity. The Circassians were loyal to the Caliph because they were Muslims. Their identity was also important, as it was necessary to retain their nationalist values against Turkish nationalism.⁵⁵⁰ Moreover, according to this narrative, the Circassian fighters (*mujahedeen*, *mücahid*) were already fighting for

⁵⁴⁷ http://www.kocaeli.gov.tr/ortak_icerik/1/tarih/kocaeli%20tarihi/index.html page 4.

⁵⁴⁸ BOA.DH.KMS. 60-2/39, document 1, 29 June 1337 (21 June 1921).

⁵⁴⁹ Çüle İbrahim Hakkı, *Efkar-ı Umumiyye Bir İzah ve Muarızlara Cevab*, Şark-ı Karib Çerkesleri Temin-i Hukuk Cemiyeti Beyanname ne Nizamname-i Esasiyesi, Çerkeslik Hareket ve Teşebbüs-i Ahirinin Esbab ve Sevaiki Tarihçesi, 1922. As it can be seen that İbrahim Hakkı used three different titles for the booklet. I will use the first one to refer the booklet.

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid. 3.

the Sultan/Caliph against the Anatolian Turkish nationalists (*Kuva-yi Milliye*), who were recognised as rebels by the Istanbul government. The fighters kept Düzce, Bolu, Gerede, Safranbolu, Mederni, Hendek, Akyazı, Adapazarı, Sapanca, Kandıra, Karamürsel, and Yalova.⁵⁵¹ He continued that they did not fight alone; a number of other Muslim groups also joined them in the fight against Ankara. Because of his success organising the anti-Ankara movement, İbrahim Hakkı was appointed as the official governor of İzmit in 25 April 1920 by the Grand Vizier Damad Ferid Paşa.⁵⁵²

The Circassian opposition was supported by Damad Ferid and Sultan Vahidettin. Both favoured signing a peace agreement with the Allies to avoid another war, since, according to them, people had had enough of war and the state had little any power to sustain an armed struggle. For that reason, both agreed with the Circassian intention to fight against the nationalist forces.⁵⁵³ However, the Ottoman Porte and the Ministry of War mostly consisted of supporters of the *Kuva-yi Milliye*. They tried to prevent Circassian attacks on the nationalists. Subsequently, Damad Ferid feared the Circassian movement might represent a greater danger to the empire than Mustafa Kemal's movement.⁵⁵⁴ For this reason, the only force under the Sultan capable of fighting Mustafa Kemal was not given adequate support to fight against Ankara. The towns taken by Circassians were then retaken by Ankara.⁵⁵⁵

Although Istanbul was under British occupation, İbrahim Hakkı's relationships with the British made Istanbul government uncomfortable. He was rather close to the British and was not controlled by the Ottoman Porte. Several Ottoman governments attempted to remove İbrahim Hakkı from office. On 6 July 1920, Grand Vizier Damad Ferid Paşa tried to appoint former Antalya governor İhsan Adli Bey as the governor of

⁵⁵¹ Ibid. 3.

⁵⁵² Ibid. 4.

⁵⁵³ Ibid. 5.

⁵⁵⁴ Ibid. 6.

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid. 6. Most of these towns were taken by Çerkes Ethem's forces from the loyalists for Ankara.

İzmit; however, he failed to do so.⁵⁵⁶ The successor to Damad Ferid, Tevfik Paşa, on 11 November 1920 assigned Abdülvahab Bey to İzmit to replace İbrahim Hakkı. However, Abdülvahab Bey was prevented from coming to İzmit by İbrahim Hakkı's men, as mentioned above.⁵⁵⁷ Abdülvahab reported that İbrahim Hakkı had a relatively warm relationship with the British and had some Circassian and Abkhazian military groups around him.⁵⁵⁸ The Porte also applied to the British Forces in Istanbul to remove him; however, the British did not.⁵⁵⁹ Thus, İbrahim Hakkı was not just a governor of İzmit, he received British support and backing from groups of armed Circassians and Abkhazians, making him seem rather like a feudal lord. Although he was in İzmit, which is about 100 km from Istanbul, the Porte could not assert its authority over him.

İbrahim claims that due to the rise of Turkish nationalism in Ankara, the Circassians supported the Istanbul government and the Sultan. The Adapazarı-Düzce incidents were example of this support. According to him, on 11 June 1920, the Circassian government (Hükümet-i Çerakkisiye) was set up in İzmit; it lasted until 27 June 1921.⁵⁶⁰ When the Greeks had to leave İzmit in June 1921, İbrahim Hakkı and his supporters asked for help from the Ministry of Interior in Istanbul, however help was not forthcoming as he claims in his own hand. He used this situation to demonstrate the changing policy of the Sultan, which was to not assist the Circassians, but to replace İslam with 'Turkishness' as the main ideology of the state.⁵⁶¹ However, İbrahim Hakkı already had been involved in prior disputes with the Istanbul government. As noted, his relationship with the government had deteriorated and he had been unwilling to accept Istanbul's decision to

⁵⁵⁶ Can Erdem, *İbrahim Hakkı Bey'in İzmit Mutasarrıflığı*, Yakın Dönem Türkiye Araştırmaları Dergisi, sayı 5. Cilt3, 2004 s. 105-124. p. 109-110.

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid. 111.

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid. 114.

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid. 115-116.

⁵⁶⁰ Çüle İbrahim Hakkı, *Efkar-ı Umumiyye Bir İzah ve Muarızlara Cevab*, Şark-ı Karib Çerkesleri Temin-i Hukuk Cemiyeti Beyanname ne Nizamname-i Esasiyesi, 13.

⁵⁶¹ Ibid. 13.

replace him as governor ever since June 1920.⁵⁶² He sent the newly appointed governor of İzmit back to Istanbul. Although both İbrahim Hakkı and Istanbul were anti-nationalist, the stubborn behaviour of İbrahim Hakkı created many problems between him and Istanbul.

It is also worth mentioning that the Istanbul government refused to help the anti-nationalist Circassians and İbrahim Hakkı when the Ankara forces took on İzmit. They were assisted by Greek forces instead. The Greeks took them from İzmit to settle in Midilli. İbrahim Hakkı set the Association for the Strengthening of Near Eastern Circassian Rights (ASNEC, *Şarkı Karip Çerkesleri Temin-i Hukuk Cemiyeti*) in July 1921. He prepared the charter of the Association, which stated that every North Caucasian (Adige, Abkhaz, Oset, Laz, Chechen, Lezgian, Kumuk and others) had a right to be a member of the Society.⁵⁶³ He tried to show the Greeks that there was Circassian opposition to the *Kuva-yi Milliye* from the beginning, and that they came together around him as the centre of the movement.

The deteriorating situation between İbrahim Hakkı and the Istanbul government was arguably the trigger for the birth of ASNEC. At the beginning of the process, the reason for establishing the association was not one based on ideology or ethnicity. Ethnicity took an important role only later, after problems began with the Istanbul government. In his own writings, İbrahim Hakkı mentions that the Circassians had no problems living with an Ottoman identity,⁵⁶⁴ since the Ottoman identity was intentionally constructed as a political identity of the subjects of the empire. The Ottoman and Circassian identities did not clash, and ‘Ottomanness’ proved an umbrella identity for the subjects of the empire. Under this umbrella, every religious and ethnic group had its own

⁵⁶² Can Erdem, “İbrahim Hakkı Bey’in İzmit Mutasarrıflığı,” *Yakın Dönem Türkiye Araştırmaları Dergisi* 3, no. 5 (2004): 105–24. 109-110.

⁵⁶³ Çüle İbrahim Hakkı, *Efkar-ı Umumiyye Bir İzah ve Muarızlara Cevab, Şark-ı Karib Çerkesleri Temin-i Hukuk Cemiyeti Beyanname ne Nizamname-i Esasiyesi*, 14.

⁵⁶⁴ Ottomanness a political identity which proposed that the different ethnic and religious groups of the Ottoman Empire could live with peace under the Ottoman Empire.

identity. The Circassian identity was an ethnic and cultural one. However, according to İbrahim Hakkı, when the Ottomans began to follow the policy of Turkishness, the Circassians also began following their own way, triggering a need for Greek assistance.⁵⁶⁵ Until the ‘wrong people’ came to power in the empire, the Circassians were very loyal to the Ottomans. Unfortunately, since they had to leave the Ottoman Empire due to the problems they had experienced during the previous two years, they began to establish their own nationalist organisations.⁵⁶⁶ This led İbrahim Hakkı to begin to develop ‘Circassianness’ as a political identity. İbrahim Hakkı also intentionally exaggerated the nationalist spirit of the Anatolian movement. While there were nationalist MPs, bureaucrats, and officers in the movement, the main reason for most people going to Ankara was to save the empire and the Sultan/Caliph from the occupation. The participants in the national movement and in the Assembly in Ankara consisted of different ethnic and religious groups. İbrahim Hakkı ignored these points to legitimise his own attempt to pursue attempts to carve out a new political niche for himself.

Despite the fact that the Sultan and some other groups in Istanbul opposed helping Ankara, the Porte supported it. Consequently, he was the governor of İzmit; and the Circassians came together to support him. The Circassians had to defend themselves with the Greek forces against the *Kuva-yi Milliye*, because they encountered a lack of support from the Istanbul government.⁵⁶⁷ They moved to Midilli to seek political asylum from the Greek government.⁵⁶⁸ The Circassians had suffered for the previous 8 years from state pressure, ever since the assassination of Mahmut Şevket Paşa (11 June 1913) up until the *Kuva-yi Milliye* (1919).⁵⁶⁹ It can be said that İbrahim Hakkı aimed to create a discourse claiming the Circassians had been victims of the Ottoman State’s policies over the

⁵⁶⁵ Çüle İbrahim Hakkı, *Efkar-ı Umumiyye Bir İzah ve Muarızlara Cevab*, Şark-ı Karib Çerkesleri Temin-i Hukuk Cemiyeti Beyanname ne Nizamname-i Esasiyesi, 13.

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid. 17.

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid. 17.

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid. 17, 18.

⁵⁶⁹ Ibid. 14.

preceding decade. This was partly true; however, not only the Circassians, but also other groups in the empire had been placed in a difficult situation by the conflict and wars during the previous decade.

This period was already one of ‘perception wars’ between rival groups. İbrahim Hakkı joined in this, by declaring that the Istanbul government had altered its policy to accept Turkish nationalism. His aim was to strengthen his hand against criticism for his movement that came from the Istanbul government and other Circassians. Some Circassians took up important positions in the Ottoman army and bureaucracy. To prevent reactions from them, İbrahim Hakkı blamed the so-called nationalist policies of the Porte.

B) The Congress

Adequate attention has not yet been paid by historians from inside and outside of Turkey regarding the Circassian Congress. This incident was only mentioned in some of the scholarly works covering the period.⁵⁷⁰ It can be said that the congress was an attempt by a group of notables who thought Greek occupation and British support would be permanent in the region. It was not possible for them to work with the Ankara government. The aim of the congress was to obtain Greek support. However, the congress was not expected to lead to a separatist movement among the Circassians of Turkey. There was no mass support from the majority of Circassians.⁵⁷¹ Rather, it can be characterised as a more limited political move by some notables in the Düzce-Adapazarı, Bilecik and Gönen-Manyas region. Other Circassians, including those who lived in the Black Sea region, Central Anatolia and South Anatolia did not participate in this congress, and they may have been entirely unaware of it.

⁵⁷⁰ Ryan Gingeras, *Sorrowful Shores; Violence, Ethnicity, and the End of the Ottoman Empire, 1912-1923* /, Oxford Studies in Modern European History. (New York : Oxford University Press, 2009).

⁵⁷¹ Ryan Gingeras, “Notorious Subjects, Invisible Citizens: North Caucasian Resistance to the Turkish National Movement in North-western Anatolia, 1919-23,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 40.1 (February 2008) 92.

When Ankara took İzmit from the Greek and British forces on 28 June 1921, İbrahim, as governor, had to leave the city. İbrahim aimed to create an autonomous structure under Greek occupation, and moved to Midilli to work with the Greeks. He prepared the first declaration of the ASNEC in Midilli to the Greek government. In this declaration, İbrahim Hakkı underlined that the Circassians had left the North Caucasus because of the Russian occupation of the region and settled in the Ottoman Empire in the 1850s and 1860s. They were more loyal to the Ottoman sultanate than even the Turks. In the empire, the Circassians took on important positions in the bureaucracy and military. However, when incompetent individuals came to power, the co-existence of different ethnic and religious groups within the empire was in danger. Like the other groups in the empire, the Circassians had now begun to carve out their own path.⁵⁷² Despite the Ottoman Sultan's opposition, the Porte had allied with the Kemalists; therefore, İbrahim Hakkı claimed, the Circassians were gathering around him to fight the Kemalists.⁵⁷³

From this declaration, it seems that İbrahim Hakkı was trying to legitimise his movement by accusing the Porte of pursuing 'Turkishness' policies. He also used the historic exile of the Circassians⁵⁷⁴ as an analogy with the current situation they faced. In the former case, the Circassians were massacred en masse and forced to leave the North Caucasus, where they had had their own principality and structures. However, in the Ottoman period the Circassians had lived for a long time as subjects of the Sultan, equal to other groups. They were not treated by the Ottoman Porte in the same way as they had been by the Russian forces. However, İbrahim Hakkı now used the Circassian exile to reach into the emotions of the Circassians. He aimed to convince the Greeks that the

⁵⁷² Çule İbrahim Hakkı, *Efkar-ı Umumiyye Bir İzah ve Muarızlara Cevab, Şark-ı Karib Çerkesleri Temin-i Hukuk Cemiyeti Beyanname ne Nizamname-i Esasiyesi*, 17.

⁵⁷³ Ibid. 17.

⁵⁷⁴ Circassian exile was the result of the Russian occupation of the North Caucasus which is the homeland of the Circassians. During the exile, from 1850s to the 1870s, the one third of the exiled Circassians were killed by the Russian forces and died on the way due to the lack of enough preparation for the exile of about a million people.

Circassians fought against the Ankara government without mentioning all those who had supported the Ankara government.⁵⁷⁵ The aim of İbrahim in preparing this declaration was to ensure that ASNEC would be recognised by the Greek government as legitimate.

Some Circassian local notables also supported the Greek-Circassian alliance proposed by İbrahim; there had been a previous agreement between several Circassian notables (*Beys*) and the Greek occupation forces. According to that agreement, İzmit, Bolu, Biga and the Bandırma region would be governed by both Greeks and Circassians together under British control.⁵⁷⁶ Furthermore, in the İzmit-Adapazarı region, it was argued in the agreement, would be retaken with the support of Circassians. The Greeks supported Çerkes Bekir and Ragıb⁵⁷⁷ in pursuance of this aim. However, they did not succeed in recapturing the region from the nationalists.⁵⁷⁸ Nevertheless, the intention is clear: anti-nationalist Circassians had tried to influence the Greeks by exaggerating their impact on Circassian society as a whole. They had declared to the Greeks that there were about five thousands Circassian under their influence. However, this did not accurately reflect reality.⁵⁷⁹

On the other hand, the activities of İbrahim Hakkı had been harshly criticised by leaders of the Society for Circassian Mutual Aid (*Çerkes Teavün Cemiyeti*) such as Müşir Fuad Paşa. He underlined that the society represented the Circassians, not İbrahim Hakkı; he also underscored that İbrahim Hakkı had been rejected by the society and was therefore to be considered shameless. Ultimately, only 300-400 Circassians joined his movement,

⁵⁷⁵ Çule İbrahim Hakkı, *Efkar-ı Umumiyye Bir İzah ve Muarızlara Cevab, Şark-ı Karib Çerkesleri Temin-i Hukuk Cemiyeti Beyanname ne Nizamname-i Esasiyesi*, 17.

⁵⁷⁶ TİTE. K63G104B104001, 22 August 1337 (1921).

⁵⁷⁷ Çerkes Ragıb was an anti-nationalist and brother in law of Mizancı Murat (1854-1917); he murdered a person in Kadıköy/Istanbul on 23 April 1337 (1921), and was imprisoned by the British. Later on he was released from the prison and worked in a very determined way for the British in Istanbul and eastern Thrace; one can speculate that he had a deal with British by which in exchange for his release he worked for the British in Anatolia. In April 1924 he was put into the '*Yüzellilik*' list. BOA. DH.KMS. 61-1/35 document 5. 9 May 1337 (1921).

⁵⁷⁸ ATASE. İSH 1481/ 140, 28 August 1337 (1921).

⁵⁷⁹ TİTE. K63G104B104001, 22 August 1337 (1921).

and the other Circassians paid little attention to his activities.⁵⁸⁰ It is worth mentioning that Müşir Fuad considered İbrahim Hakkı, Ahmed Anzavur and Şah İsmail in the same category: as having no relations with ‘Circassiennes’ (*Çerkeslik*). Thus was because their activities could not be linked with the remainder of the Circassian community who were loyal to their state and their people.⁵⁸¹ One can argue that Müşir Fuad Paşa attempted to simplify anti-nationalist Circassian activities by citing that a ‘mere 300-400 people’ were backing İbrahim Hakkı, ignoring many Circassians’ broken relationships with the Ankara government. He aimed to prove the anti-nationalist Circassians’ marginalisation. While only a small number of the hundreds of thousands of Circassians in Anatolia worked with the Greeks, one could argue that the majority of Circassians favoured Istanbul and the Sultan/Caliph and not the Ankara government, and so could easily be mobilised during this period, as seen in the Anzavur incident and the Adapazarı-Düzce incidents.

C) The Declaration by Congress

There was also an internal struggle among the anti-nationalist Circassians.⁵⁸² This centred on who would lead the congress. One group supported Kazım Bey from Manyas/Yeniköy. Another group, which Takığ Şevket and his men dominated, supported Çerkes Ethem. The commander of the Bandırma branch of the Greek occupation forces unsuccessfully sought a middle way between the two. He asked for Ethem’s help, but Ethem and his brother Reşid convinced Şevket not to interrupt the congress.⁵⁸³ Although only a very small number of Circassians joined the group, the congress was known as ‘the Circassian club’ among the people.⁵⁸⁴ The club was not only representative of the

⁵⁸⁰ ATASE.İSH. 1163/164, document no 164, 164a, 164aa, 164aaa 14/08/1337 (1920). Interview with Müşir Fuad Paşa by Tevhid-i Efkâr newspaper.

⁵⁸¹ Ibid. document no 164, 164a, 164aa, 164aaa 14/08/1337 (1920). Interview with Müşir Fuad Paşa by *Tevhid-i Efkâr* newspaper.

⁵⁸² Kemal Özer, *Kurtuluş Savaşında Göneler* (Balıkesir: Türkdili Matbaası, 1964), 129.

⁵⁸³ Ibid. 129.

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid. 131.

Circassians; it also consisted with other people working with the Greek and the British forces. Some Circassians, for example those in Manyas (which was an important centre of the Circassian club), opposed the club. Yusuf Bey, from Haydar village, Çerkes İsmail Bey and Hafız Ahmed Efendi from Demirkapı were all arrested by the Greeks and exiled to Greece due to their opposition.⁵⁸⁵

The majority of the participants of the Circassian Congress (24 October 1921) were from the Düzce-Adapazarı region. Three non-South Marmara originating Circassian families dominated the congress. The families from Çule, Bağ and Maan were all residents of the East Marmara and West Black Sea regions (Düzce, İzmit, Adapazarı and Eskişehir) and well-known families among the Circassians.⁵⁸⁶ The most prominent figures at the Congress were (Pşevu) Reşit Bey (Çerkes Ethem's brother) and the old governor of İzmit (Çule) İbrahim Hakkı (who was also the preeminent person of the association and at the congress). On 11 October 1921, 24 people came together as members of the congress in İzmir. The members then made a declaration (the participants of this congress were from the Greek occupied zone of Anatolia). Although hundreds of different Circassian families lived in the region, only 15 Circassian families were members of the congress. It is necessary to quote from the declaration at length:

The authorities signed below are the representatives of the Circassian people of western Anatolia, which is today under the Greek occupational army, [and in particular of] Balıkesir, Bandırma, Erdek, Gönen, Biga, Kirmasti, Mihaliç [Karacabey], Bursa, İnegöl, Yenişehir, Aydın, Manisa, İzmir, Eskişehir, Kütahya, Afyonkarahisar as well as İzmit, Adapazarı, Hendek, Düzce, Bolu and their environs. They are also the founders of 'The Association for the Strengthening of Near Eastern Circassian Rights' [which is] sanctioned by the Greek government. This meeting, which is in the form of a congress, undertakes its national rights as a minority based on the national rights as determined by the national principles accepted and declared by the Great Powers at the end of the Great War. The representatives ask for their national demands with the declaration that the Circassians will seek refuge under the Allied Great Powers, who agreed among themselves to force

⁵⁸⁵ Özer, *Kurtuluş Savaşında Gönen*. 129.

⁵⁸⁶ Traditionally every single Circassian families have a lineage name (*Sülale ismi* in Turkish).

Separatism, Violence, and Collaboration acceptance [of these rights] of the losing states, and its partners, in particular the Greek government.

The population of Circassians today residing in Anatolia is at the very least two million. Circassians defend and maintain their national traditions through language, customs, feelings and civilization...They are in the contemporary family of civilizations and are a part of the white race and the distinguished Aryan family....

Upon the collapse of the Arab government and upon the decision of the Egyptian government in Cairo, the Circassians were continuously in the governments that were established in the Arab lands, North Africa and Syria for three centuries. In the Caucasus, which is their national homeland, the Circassians formed a republic [which was] independent administratively and politically. They are the famous fighters [who] continuously fought for twenty years against the Russian Empire, under the administration and command of the well-known Sheikh Shamil (Şeyh Şamil), who saw the danger of the Russian invasion.

A population of two million Circassians from the northern and western Caucasus, which was composed of three million people, was suspicious of [Russian actions] and bit by bit emigrated to Turkey (at that time the Sublime Porte extended a protective invitation). The one million people that stayed in the North Caucasus have today grown to a population of three million according to Russian statistics.

According to calculations, the two million Circassians who immigrated to Turkey would have risen to a population of between three to six million. Unfortunately, today it is closer to two million. The reason why is this: It is extremely clear that there were tragedies in transport as a result of mismanagement, which is impossible for the Ottoman government to deny. As a result of being sacrificed to these catastrophes, the Circassians have been denied four million of its population.

Thirteen years before with the institution of constitutional rule, the Turkish administration became bereft of correct policies. Now filled with feelings [stemming] from Turkishism and Turanism, Turkish administrators followed at this unique moment in history a false policy of terrorism, by means of Turkification, towards the various Ottoman nationalities. With the destruction of the nationalities and the destruction of the vital security of non-Turks, the Circassians were stirred with a just grievance coming from a 'pure desire of self-preservation'. Because of these continuous calamities, Circassians have [moved towards] a national goal of self-preservation and commit themselves to armed resistance against the mass murder of the Circassian nation.

Because of this, Circassians have lost thousands of their precious children. Their property and animals have been stolen and their villages burned. In short, Circassians have been and continue to be in a state of defiance in this war despite being allotted no sanctuary and the destruction and seizure of their property. However, it is not [the case]

that Circassians did not join the world war either as commanders or as soldiers with their farm animals. But like various other nations, they were forced by their feelings and by the law. Nevertheless a very small portion of Circassians joined the Anatolian revolutionaries (filled with false feelings) right after the ceasefire. Mustafa Kemal [says] his movement supports the foundation of the sultanate, yet the Kemalists are seen and understood as a movement against humanity and with false policies. Regretfully, a very small number of Circassians have entered into the service of this movement.

The Circassians in the Sublime Porte, who continue to support the Caliphate, are especially working together with the Kemalists. Despite this self-sacrifice, [the Porte] still neglects the Circassians. After not seeing that they will be saved, the Circassians decided correctly and naturally to join the Greek army, which promises to preserve them, in the occupation zone. (There is no doubt that Albania and the Arab States similarly sought foreign saviours well before). These Circassians, who have struggled for a year and a half and who have saved thousands of innocent Muslims and non-Muslims from mass murder, should be praised for their services.

The understanding Greek government, which is included in the highest levels of civilization and humanity among nations, recognizes no difference among Circassians, Armenians and especially Rum. It has provided for the welfare of Circassian immigrants and refugees in the form of substance and settlement.

It is fitting to remember, with thanks and with kind words, those who aid and extend trust to our countrymen taken as prisoners of war, those under the submission of Kemalist oppression and to the Circassian people living in areas under the administration of the military occupation since the days the Greek government set foot in Anatolia.

As a consequence of these kind actions, the Circassians hope and request that, because of their convictions, they be included in the understanding of civilization and their legal and human rights be defended. These things have been [discussed] face to face between the Circassians, which is a secular nation, and the Rum peoples.

The goals of this petition are:

A. Recognition of our national existence.

B. To make known that the secular Circassian nation lives in constant danger.

C. To advance the demand that the Circassians wish to live as an element of peace under Greek protection in order to protect the Circassians of the Near East from the sins of the Turkish administration. [This is in response to] the Ottoman government which was a warring and tumultuous element in Europe and the Near East, both within and without, which denied a competent, modern and civilized administration and which collapsed because of the mismanagement of the sultan over the last three hundred years. [This continued with] the constitutional government, which stood in the place of the Ottoman

government, which insisted, under the extreme Turkists, that it did not recognize the human rights of non-Turks in Anatolia. This is an impossible denial of the truth according to the civilized world.

As a consequence, our congress requests a statement to the petitioners, who expect action with impatience, regarding the acceptance of our demands which are national [in nature] according to the Allied Great Powers and their partners.

1. The application of the laws regarding the guarantee of human rights to minorities to all Circassians, laws that were accepted and proposed among the states following the war and that was to be brought into the Near East.
2. The imposition of protection under the civilized Greek government [and] of the desired [fulfilment] of the predestined unity of the Circassian nation with the Rum nation, which has been agreed upon. The Greek government hopes by force to [further] the progress and development [of these two nations].
3. The rendering on an indemnity from the Turkish government to the Circassian nation for all the damages incurred....
4. The participation of our representatives in the peace conference in order to negotiate our national demands.

The following individuals undersigned the document.

Adapazarı representative— (Bag) Talustan Bey
Izmit representative— (Çule) İbrahim Bey
Izmit representative— (Çiyo) Kazım Bey
Hendek representative— (Bag) Osman Bey
Düzce representative— (Maan) Ali Bey
Düzce representative— (Hamete) Ahmet Bey
Kandıra and Karasu representative— (Maan) Şirin Bey
Yalova–Karamürsel representative— (Ançok) Yakup Bey
Bilecik representative— (Bag) Rifat Bey
Eskişehir representative— (Bag) Kamil Bey
Geyve representative— (Çule) Beslan Bey
Bursa representative—Harunelreşit Efendi
Biga representative— (Ançok) İsa Nuri Bey
Gönen representative— (Lampezi) Yakup Efendi
Gönen representative—Hafız Sait Efendi of the Regional Committee
Erdek representative— (Şahabel) Hasan Bey
Bandırma representative— (Neçoku) Hasan Bey
Bandırma representative— (Brau) Sait Bey

Bandırma representative— (Berzek) Tahir Bey
Balıkesir representative— (Bazadog) Sait Bey
Manisa representative— (Pşev) Reşit Bey
Aydın representative— (Kavaca) Hüseyin Bey
*Kütahya representative— (Açofit) Sami Bey*⁵⁸⁷

The text, which was sent by İbrahim Hakkı to the Greek government in Midilli, provided the basis of this declaration. However, in the three months between July 1921 and October 1921, some changes were made to it. Thus, there are some differences between the first version of the declaration written by İbrahim Hakkı and the final version of it (as quoted above). In the first version of the declaration, it was mentioned that Circassians, Kurds and Turks, who were also in opposition to the Kemalists, would live peacefully in Western Anatolia. However, in the final edition, the reference to Turks and Kurds had disappeared. The only emphasis was on the Circassians, since the movement had transfigured to become an ethnic one. Another important emphasis was on the Circassians who had fought for Ankara. In the first edition, it was stressed that they had left Ankara, and returned to the Porte, Sultan and Circassianness (*Çerkeslik*⁵⁸⁸). However, in the final version of the text, the words ‘Porte’ and ‘Sultan’ were excluded from the text and only Circassianness remained.⁵⁸⁹

The vice governor of Aydın province informed the Porte that a group of Circassians had come together at the seaside in İzmir (Kordon) in a coffee house (Kainfoti’nin kahvesi).⁵⁹⁰ The gathering was organised by İbrahim Hakkı Bey. Although Ethem was not one of the signatories to the declaration, his brother Reşid and his men had participated in the meeting.⁵⁹¹ The decision was taken by the participants that they

⁵⁸⁷ Gingeras, *Sorrowful Shores*, 2009, 124-127.

⁵⁸⁸ Çule İbrahim Hakkı, *Efkar-ı Umumiyye Bir İzah ve Muarızlara Cevab, Şark-ı Karib Çerkesleri Temin-i Hukuk Cemiyeti Beyanname ne Nizamname-i Esasiyesi*, 17.

⁵⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 22.

⁵⁹⁰ BOA.DH.KMS. 60-3/26, document 2, 3 Kanunievvel 1337 (3 December 1921).

⁵⁹¹ According to one military intelligence report Ethem, and Anzavurzade Kadir worked to set up a Circassian government in the region. They also invited Çerkes Bekir, Reşid, Eşref, Ragıp and lieutenant Bahadır from İstanbul. ATASE.İSH. 1485/2, 3 Teşrinievvel (October) 1337 (1921). However, it is not

would not recognise the Ottoman government, but would recognise Greek rule instead. The Vice Governor did not take the meeting seriously, since there were only 25 signatories who had been supposed to represent all the Circassians in the region.⁵⁹²

The other Circassians, or those still loyal to the Sultan, then criticised the congress and its participants, defining them as ‘good-for-nothings’ ‘*Serseriler*’. They underlined that the Circassians were still loyal to the Caliph along with the Turks, and that the congress and its participants in no way represented the Circassians. They also declared that those who participated in the Congress were simply a few people working for their own ends, with no intention to benefit the Circassians.⁵⁹³ The majority of the loyal Circassians of the Ottoman Empire remained as either military men or bureaucrats. After the declaration by loyalist Circassians, two leading and two regular members of the Circassian Congress prepared an additional text. In this text, which was signed by Talustan Bey, İbrahim Hakkı,⁵⁹⁴ Mehmed Sami and Mehmed Said drew an analogy between their own movement and the Arab independence movement. According to the text, during WWI, the Arabs had sought the help of the Allies to protect their nation against increasing Ottoman burdens and atrocities. The Circassians now encountered the same problem and so sought Greek help.⁵⁹⁵ They also criticised loyalist Circassians who remained silent as their fellow Circassians were being hanged by nationalist forces during clashes in İzmit and the surrounding areas.⁵⁹⁶

clear what they referred to by using the term ‘Circassian government’ to refer to the Circassian Congress or not.

⁵⁹² BOA.DH.KMS. 60-3/26, document 2, 3 Kanunievvel 1337 (3 December 1921).

⁵⁹³ Çule İbrahim Hakkı, *Efkar-ı Umumiyye Bir İzah ve Muarızlara Cevab, Şark-ı Karib Çerkesleri Temin-i Hukuk Cemiyeti Beyanname ne Nizamname-i Esasiyesi*, 26. Vakit newspaper 29 rebiülevvel 1340 – 30 Teşrinisani 337.

⁵⁹⁴ While Talustan Bey was the head of the association, İbrahim Hakkı was its vice precedent. ‘An explanation to the public’, Çule İbrahim Hakkı, p.32.

⁵⁹⁵ Çule İbrahim Hakkı, *Efkar-ı Umumiyye Bir İzah ve Muarızlara Cevab, Şark-ı Karib Çerkesleri Temin-i Hukuk Cemiyeti Beyanname ne Nizamname-i Esasiyesi*, 9 Rebiülahir 1340, 32.

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid. 30.

2 – Circassian Opposition in the Western Anatolia

Following the Turkish – Greek War, Ankara still had difficulty consolidating its authority in South Marmara. To gain control of the region Ankara employed very harsh policies against its opponents. Execution by shooting was commonplace during both the war and in the years immediately following. On 5 September 1922, Ankara government forces advanced towards Gönen, where the nationalists were exposed, and opened fire on the Circassian and Christian districts in the town as a skirmish erupted between nationalists and local armed groups. However, it is noteworthy that despite ten hours of clashes in which 150 people from the local forces were killed and 170 others were taken hostage; only one person was killed on the nationalist side.⁵⁹⁷

Two approaches existed for the opponents of Ankara; one was to fight against the Kemalists to the end in collaboration with the Greeks, while the second was to leave the country because there was no opportunity to sustain their way of life. Initially many chose the first option; however, ultimately they had to take the second as Ankara's power in the region grew. Some Circassians, such as Kirmastılı Çerkes Davut, Osman Çavuş of Akhisar/Selendi, Anzavur's son Kadir, and Kısıkça Çerkes Hasan Bey, believed that the Ankara government's policy was to wipe the Circassians from the region and this led them to collaborate with Greek forces.⁵⁹⁸ Irregular Circassian forces used Midilli Island as a staging ground to incite the people of the South Marmara against the Ankara government.

There were a number of different opposition groups in South Marmara at the time.⁵⁹⁹ Although there were some intelligence reports on the activities and estimations

⁵⁹⁷ İbrahim Ethem Akıncı, *Demirci Akıncıları*, Yayınlar (Ankara : Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1978), 360. Ahmet Efe, *Çerkez Ethem* (İstanbul: Bengi Kitap Yayın, 2009), 460.

⁵⁹⁸ Akıncı, *Demirci Akıncıları*, 216-217.

⁵⁹⁹ Some Circassians were also involved in banditry activities under the Greek controlled Thrace during the Greek forces leaving from the region. Maanzade Ali Bey, Bağzade Refik Bey, Parmaksız Torunzade Nezih Bey, Bağ Osman Bey, Karabıgalı Kara Mustafa (one of Ferid Paşa's servant) Koçzade Şerif Bey were the leading persons of the bandits TİTE. K53G71B71-3001, 04/10/1338 (1922).

of their numbers in the region, with one claiming that there were six thousand Circassian and Turkish anti-nationalists in the Kirmasti, Susurluk, Mihalliç and Gönen areas, it is very difficult to calculate the precise number of anti-nationalists.⁶⁰⁰ Towards the end of the war, although Greek occupation forces were often suspicious of Circassians activities, they nonetheless attempted to use some of the anti-nationalist Circassians in South Marmara against the Ankara government, to provide security in the region.⁶⁰¹ A number of Circassians colluded with the Greeks, since they had already broken ties with Ankara, and their return to the nationalist cause was prevented by a decision taken by the cabinet in Ankara.⁶⁰² The decision also stipulated that they would be executed if arrested by government forces.⁶⁰³ One could argue that both the Greeks and the British used armed groups to pressure Ankara during the Lausanne Peace Treaty negotiations held between Turkey and the Allies from November 1922 to July 1923.

Among the armed groups, the support for the British and the Greeks was vital, because they had no opportunity to reconcile with the Ankara government. Some ex-CUP and *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa* agents from among the anti-nationalist Circassians were seeking ways to start an insurgency to achieve their aims. One noteworthy example was a plan by Kuşçubaşı Eşref Bey. Eşref had split with the Ankara government and joined Ethem when Ethem had met with the Greek general in Dereköy/Susurluk on 28 January 1921.⁶⁰⁴ Eşref's activities between February 1921 and April 1923 remain unclear. However, in April 1923 Eşref came to the stage in Midilli as the founder of the Anatolian

⁶⁰⁰ TİTE. K57G55B55a001, 09/07/1338 (1922).

⁶⁰¹ TİTE. K50G180B180001, 18/6/1338 (1922).

⁶⁰² Just a year after Ethem was excluded from the national movement, he and other opposite Circassians, Abkhazians and Eşref Bey's situation was discussed between the Ministry of War and the Cabinet. Even in the case of their pardon, Ministry of War asked from the Cabinet that whether they would be free to come to Anatolia or not. On 22 January 1922, the Cabinet declared that they would not be allowed to come to Anatolia. Ankara insisted that they should be far away from Anatolia. BCA. 30 18 1 1.4.45.16, 22. 1 (January). 1338 (1922).

⁶⁰³ Çerkes Hasan, Kazım, İbrahim, Hasan Fehmi, Ragıp were some of them TİTE. K59G137B137-1001, 1 July 1338 (1922).

⁶⁰⁴ Emrah Cilasun, "*Baki ile Selam*" *Çerkes Ethem* (İstanbul: Belge Yayınları, 2004), documents (no page number).

Revolutionary Society (*Anadolu İhtilal Cemiyeti*). The Society was established in Athens and then moved to Midilli in April 1923.⁶⁰⁵ The aim of the Society was to start an anti-nationalist uprising with the support of the British and the Greeks in Western Anatolia and to overthrow the Ankara government.⁶⁰⁶ As with the other armed groups of the region, the majority of this group's members were Circassian. However, it should be emphasised that the intention behind recruiting members from this group was not to create a Circassian national aspiration; this was something that did not exist among the group's members. They benefitted from being Circassian in terms of easy network access and creation; however, one cannot say that they worked to advance the Circassianness (*Çerkeslik*) issue.

The driving force of the group was to oppose the Ankara government, because they feared that if that government were to take complete control over the region it would either execute them or force them from it. One of Eşref's aims was to create chaos in South Marmara and to overthrow the government. For this aim, a declaration was prepared for the military in order to convince the soldiers not to fight against them for the Ankara government.⁶⁰⁷ The declaration would be circulated in Istanbul with the support of the people, and at some houses and via centres of the Anatolian Revolutionary Society, which he hoped would open in Istanbul.⁶⁰⁸ The evidence shows that Eşref preferred to avoid fighting with the Turkish security forces, choosing instead to convince them to rise up with him against the Ankara government.

To this end, he utilised his networks in Istanbul, İzmir, Thrace and Anatolia. He met with the different opposition groups to solidify the opposition movements in Western

⁶⁰⁵ ATASE.İSH. 1666/88, document no aa 23/06/1339. According to an intelligence report, there were 300 anti-nationalists in Midilli who left İzmit for Midilli after the Ankara government's forces took the city in July 1921. They consisted of Muslims, Circassians and Rums. TİTE. K48G17B17-1001, 23/05/1338 (1922).

⁶⁰⁶ The Greeks in particular helped them to create a chaos in western Anatolia BOA.HR. İM. 81/ 57. 23 August 1339 (1923).

⁶⁰⁷ ATASE.İSH. 1667/87 and 87aa 24/7/39.

⁶⁰⁸ ATASE.İSH. 1667/87 and 87aa 24/7/39.

Anatolia. These included representatives of the İzmir Rum Association, Taşnak Party, Pontus Association (Agop Pargasiyan and Virnat Beys), various officers from the British intelligence such as Antoy, captains Grenuville and Harry, lieutenant Ralung and William, Arthur Korpa and others like Çerkes Mustafa, Çerkes Kazım, Cemaleddin, and Hayreddin Beys.⁶⁰⁹ The core of the organisation comprised Çerkes Ragıp, Çerkes Hurşid, Çerkes Osman in Sakız Island, Gürcü Muharrem and Çerkes İsmail in Athens.⁶¹⁰ With this help, Eşref attempted to mobilise the Circassians of South Marmara against the Ankara government. He also approached local Circassian notables in the districts of Bandırma, Gönen and Manyas; however, as had happened when he was working for the nationalists in February 1920 in Adapazarı, the local notables paid little attention to his activities.⁶¹¹ He had no impact on the local notables of Bandırma, Gönen and Manyas.

The Anatolian Revolutionary Society also tried to mobilise the anti-nationalists in Istanbul and issued copies of a declaration prepared by the society to promote their ideas among anti-nationalist circles in Istanbul.⁶¹² Rahmi Bey, the well-known former governor of İzmir, whose son had been kidnapped by Çerkes Ethem in 1919, was the main personality involved on the Istanbul branch of the committee. He mentioned that their aim was to overthrow Mustafa Kemal and to return the Ottoman Sultan to Istanbul.⁶¹³ Eşref and Reşid were also active in Athens and the various Greek islands. Ankara monitored their activities through officials in Athens. Furthermore, Ankara planned to place one of their agents in the group to pose as an anti-nationalist to gather information.⁶¹⁴ The group later moved the headquarters of the committee to Bucharest under Hoca Vasfi's control.

⁶⁰⁹ ATASE.İSH. 1666/ 88, document no aa 23/06/1339.

⁶¹⁰ ATASE.İSH. 1666/ 88, document no aa 23/06/1339.

⁶¹¹ ATASE.İSH. 1666/88, document no ac 23/06/1339.

⁶¹² ATASE.İSH. 1666/88, document no ac 23/06/1339.

⁶¹³ PRO/FO/ E11493/8401/44.document no 140,141, 11/9/1923.

⁶¹⁴ BOA.HR.İM. 77/44, document 2, 29 June 1923.

Çerkes Ethem, his brothers, Eşref, Anzavurzade Kadir and some other Circassians were known to gather in a pub in Athens sometimes.⁶¹⁵ Kadir would be sent to the Ayvalık coast with four thousand Circassians living on Sakız island (Chios). This group also planned the assassinations of leading figures in the national movement, such as Mustafa Kemal, İsmet, Fevzi, Nureddin and Refet Paşas.⁶¹⁶ Nevertheless, one should be cautious and note that some of the correspondents sent by the Turkish military services exaggerated the activities of Çerkes Ethem and the other Circassian dissidents in Greece. For example, it was mentioned in one report that four thousand Circassians living in Sakız might join Kadri's military attack against the Ankara government.⁶¹⁷ These four thousand Circassians were later settled in three villages in Athens and Thessalonica with their wives and children. The numbers referred to in the correspondence should most likely be viewed as hyperbole. According to other correspondence relating to the same report, Ethem, Reşid, Tevfik, and Eşref were expected to organise an attack against the Ankara government with 20,000 Circassians and 8,000 Greek volunteers.⁶¹⁸ It can be said that if anyone had 20,000 armed people under his/her control at the time in South Marmara, he/she could easily set up his/her own state. It seems likely that the report was a huge exaggeration.

Other active groups during this period, in the Biga – Gönen – Manyas areas, can also be listed: the *Teğmen Mehmet Ali çetesi* ('Sub-lieutenant Mehmet Ali's gang) in Manyas; the *Kel Ali çetesi* (which stood for 'Ali the Bold') in Gönen; and, lastly, the one led by *Kanlı Mustafa*, '*Mustafa the bloody*' in Biga.⁶¹⁹ Mehmet Ali's group became depleted in Dikili following a battle with Ankara's forces. After this Mehmet Ali (Takığ)

⁶¹⁵ ATASE.İSH. 1666/53, document no aa 03/05/39 (1923).

⁶¹⁶ ATASE.İSH. 1666/53, document no aa, 03/05/39 (1923).

⁶¹⁷ ATASE.İSH. 1666/53, document no aa, 03/05/39 (1923).

⁶¹⁸ ATASE.İSH. 1666/53, document no aa, 03/05/39 (1923).

⁶¹⁹ *Mülazim-i evvel Mehmet Ali Çetesi, Kel Aziz Çetesi, Kanlı Mustafa Çetesi see Mehmet Fetgeray Şoeneu, Tüm Eserleri (Kağdav: Ankara, 1997), 224-25.*

Çerkes Şevket⁶²⁰ took control of the group. In December 1922, he was active in the Aegean Islands and tried to pass over to Western Anatolia. He also attempted to mobilise the Circassians of the region to sustain his anti-nationalist activities. From the shores of Dikili in the Aegean Sea, north of İzmir towards the north east of the region to Düzce in the coast of Black Sea, there were a huge number of Circassian settlements. While they were seen as loyal subjects of the empire in the late Ottoman period and were settled near the capital by the Ottoman government, with the emergence of the ‘new Turkey’ they were now viewed as threat. With this suspicion came the deportation of Circassians from South Marmara and the Adapazarı regions. The Circassians’ loyalty to the Ottoman State and armed opposition to a group of them against the nationalists were seen as problems by Ankara. With the declaration of the end of the Ottoman State by the Ankara government (after the abolition of the Ottoman Sultanate on 1 November 1922) the armed Circassian groups became more active in the region than ever before. In the post Turkish-Greek war period, the only armed threat to Ankara was from these armed groups. Although the Circassians of the region clearly did not favour the Ankara government, as clearly seen during the Anzavur incident and in related documents, neither did they support an armed struggle against them in the post-Turkish-Greek War era.

The intelligence services of the Ankara government informed the nationalist leaders that Çerkes Şevket was planning to attack from Athens with 25 armed men, and that he was moving towards Edremit and Ayvalık in Western Anatolia via the Aegean Islands.⁶²¹ His aim was to reach the Manyas, Kazdağı, Bozdağ area to prepare the people there for further uprisings – largely by gaining the support of local Circassians.⁶²² Şevket

⁶²⁰ In some of the records he was known as Çerkes Ethem’s brother, which was not true but he was very close to Çerkes Ethem. He was from Mürüvetler village of Manyas, also known as *Takış Şevket* or *Mürüvetlerli Şevket*.

⁶²¹ ATASE.İSH. 1666/26, document no al 04/02/1339 (1923) According to this document, Çerkes Ethem was in Germany at that time.

⁶²² ATASE.İSH. 1666/26, document no al and ak 27/12/38/ ATASE.İSH. 1667/7, 21/1/39 (1923). According to same report Ethem was in Limni and ready to come to the region after Şevket’s attack.

argued that with the participation of local Circassians the group would be able to start an uprising that would then lead to a broader insurrection against the nationalist government.⁶²³ The group came ashore between İzmir Foça and Dikili in a two-staged landing, on 18 and 20 December 1922 under Şevket's leadership.⁶²⁴ The group also aimed to assassinate leading figures of the Ankara government. However, after a skirmish in the town of Kaplanköy between Şevket's group and nationalists, two individuals from Şevket's group were killed and nine captured by nationalist forces. Seven of these were questioned by the nationalists on the activities of the group.⁶²⁵ Although a leading member of the group was a Circassian, it also consisted of Turks. Eight people were Circassian from Manyas, while others were from İzmir, Ayvalık, Antalya, Afyonkarahisar and Konya.⁶²⁶

The nationalists took further precautions following this event, fearing that those who could not be captured would move to the Manyas region (eight of those captured were from Manyas).⁶²⁷ Thus, the government's attention was turned towards Manyas. It is also important to mention that, for Ankara, not only was the South Marmara region under threat, but so was Adapazarı. Even here, there was a threat of an anti-nationalist raid led by Şevket's group.⁶²⁸ This fear was related to the high population of Circassians, which meant that Şevket's group could take action in the region. This created paranoia for the Ankara government regarding the Circassians in the region, who they thought could rise against the Ankara government. The First Army Command sent warnings to commanders

However, another intelligence report claims that Ethem was in Germany with his brother. ATASE.İSH. 1666/26, document no al 04/02/1339 (1923).

⁶²³ ATASE.İSH. 1667/7, 21/1/39 (1923).

⁶²⁴ ATASE.İSH. 1667/7, 21/1/39 (1923).

⁶²⁵ ATASE.İSH. 1666/26, document no al and ak, 27/12/38 (1922).

⁶²⁶ ATASE.İSH. 1666/26, document no al and ak, 27/12/38 (1922). Their names were Şevket, Kadir (son of Mehmet), gendarme lieutenant Mehmed Ali, Harun Çavuş, Arab Hamdi, Abdül, Yusuf Efendi, Yusuf, Mehmed Çavuş, Mehmed Efendi (son of Mustafa), Bekir, Kadri, Bayram, Vapur İbrahim, İbrahim (son of Tahir), Mustafa, Mehmed, Tahsin. There are too many details about the members of the group, ranging from their ethnicity and age to what clothes they had on them at the moment. ATASE.İSH. 1666/26, document no am, ama.

⁶²⁷ ATASE.İSH. 1666/26, document no al and ak, 27/12/38 (1922).

⁶²⁸ ATASE.İSH. 1666/26, document no ah, 29/12/38 (1922).

in İzmit and Adapazarı that the Circassians should be observed closely but secretly by military intelligence. Due to the activities of the armed groups in the region, they should also be kept under strict control.⁶²⁹ If anyone in the region worked with armed Circassians, then the military authorities should be informed.⁶³⁰ The Circassian Association of Istanbul (*Çerkes Teavün Cemiyeti*) was also monitored by representatives of the Ankara government. As a consequence of Anzavurzade Kadir's presence in Istanbul, the Ankara government suspected that he was attempting to contact members of other associations and the Circassians in İzmit-Adapazarı.⁶³¹

In this context, Şevket's family members were harassed after he became involved in anti-nationalist activity in South Marmara, where he was branded a 'traitor' by the government. He, however, took revenge punishing those who claimed this, especially those who caused upset to his family.⁶³² He hid in Söğütlü village,⁶³³ close to Gönen. However, a few days later, a villager from Söğütlü informed the gendarme of his whereabouts. The gendarme carried out military operations and he was killed on 7 June 1923.⁶³⁴ His aunt and his aunt's husband were arrested. His aunt was punished with a ten-year sentence.⁶³⁵ Şevket's killing by nationalist forces caused indignation among the Circassian residents of the area. The government then became concerned about an uprising in the region, since the majority of Şevket's group was from the Gönen and Manyas region.⁶³⁶

⁶²⁹ ATASE.İSH. 1666/26, document no ad 18/1/39(1923) and ATASE.İSH. 1666/26, document no ab, ac. It is also important to mention the Ankara government saw Georgians a similar threat as the Circassians. It was thought that Georgians could also join the Circassians armed groups. ATASE.İSH. 1666/26, document no aa.

⁶³⁰ ATASE.İSH. 1666/26, document no ac.

⁶³¹ ATASE.İSH. 1534/139, document no aa, 28/11/38 (1922)-07/12/38 (1922).

⁶³² Oral History project by Kuban Kural, 'Unutulan Geçmişin Peşinde: 'Gönen – Manyas Çerkes Sürgünü', interview with Gürol Demir, <http://www.gusips.net/analysis/sozlutarih/4338-gurol-demir-babam-yillar-sonra-kayseri-de-surgundayken-dayimin-oturdugu-evi-buldu.html> accessed 01/03/2015.

⁶³³ Ibid.

⁶³⁴ Şoenu, *Tüm Eserleri*, 224- 25.

⁶³⁵ Fetgerrey claims that Şevket's aunt's husband was not punished since he was not Circassian. Şoenu, *Tüm Eserleri*, 224-25.

⁶³⁶ Kural, 'Unutulan Geçmişin', interview with Gürol Demir <http://www.gusips.net/analysis/sozlutarih/4338-gurol-demir-babam-yillar-sonra-kayseri-de-surgundayken-dayimin-oturdugu-evi-buldu.html> accessed 01/03/2015.

Moreover, a second group came to the region from the port of Dalyan, which was close to the other Circassian settlements in South Marmara. The Circassian members of this group were not from the Gönen-Manyas region,⁶³⁷ and the group itself was centred in Greece.⁶³⁸ Their leader was Ali, and they had prepared a manifesto against the Ankara government. Another important group was led by Mustafa ‘the bloody’. Anzavur’s son, Kadir, was a member of this group. They tried to come to Biga through the British occupied zone of Çanakkale. However, they were attacked by nationalist forces around Biga, and some were killed, including Kadir. The remainder of the group were captured. Between 70 and 150 people were active in the band, 15 of whose members were Circassian.⁶³⁹

3 – Gönen-Manyas Deportations

Ankara’s main policy when trying to halt the activities of the gangs was to destroy their sources of recruitment and financing. The Circassians were targeted by the Ankara government, which had tried to wipe their political and economic presence from the region in order to take effective control over the area and to cease bandit activity.⁶⁴⁰ When Anzavur came to the region bringing an uprising against the Ankara government in the early 1920s, he was supported by people from several villages: Muratlar,⁶⁴¹ Keçeler, Bayramiç, Üçpınar, Karalar Çiftliği, Çerkes Keçidere, Karağaçalı, Ayvalıdere, Hacı Menteş, Sızı Hasanbey, Çerkes Çalı Oba and Asmalıdere (Muhacir–Türk).⁶⁴² Anzavur was not only supported by the Circassians of the region, but also by Turks and other

⁶³⁷ Şoenu, *Tüm Eserleri*, 225-227.

⁶³⁸ Ibid. 225-227.

⁶³⁹ Şoenu, *Tüm Eserleri*, 226-227.

⁶⁴⁰ Gingeras, *Sorrowful Shores*, 146.

⁶⁴¹ Several people from this village were executed by shooting by the *Kuva-yi Milliye* Kemal Özer, 74.

⁶⁴² Özer, *Kurtuluş Savaşında Gönen*. 72. A lieutenant, Mehmet Ziya Şahan, informed Kemal Özer about these villages. Most of these villages were deported by Ankara to eastern and central Anatolia in May and June 1923.

groups sympathetic to the anti-nationalist movement.⁶⁴³ The people here saw Ankara as a resource centre for gangs, which had to be removed from the region. Ankara hoped that by employing this policy, the birthplace of banditry in Western Anatolia would be destroyed. This security-centred policy brought about a collective punishment for many civilian Circassians in the region. Without differentiating between whether individuals supported the gangs or not, the Circassian villagers and the Circassians in otherwise ethnically mixed villages were exiled to Central and Eastern Anatolia. It should also be noted here that it was argued by some witnesses to the incident, that in order for the new state to develop an idea of a Turkish nation, a Turkish national grudge directed towards the Circassians proved useful, while also punishing their formerly close relationship with the Sultanate.⁶⁴⁴

Conversely, it can be argued that the anti-nationalist Circassians were stuck between the Greek forces and Ankara. Ankara had already concluded that they would have no place in South Marmara. Kuşçubaşı Eşref and Çerkes Ethem (although the latter was in Germany at the time), through his close connections with Çerkes Şevket and in view of Şevket's presence in the region, led the nationalists to believe that Ethem too was active in the region. Their groups were clearly seen as security threats by the Ankara government, which believed that Eşref and Ethem would attempt to raise the Circassians of Biga and the Karesi regions against Ankara.⁶⁴⁵ On 7 May 1923, the Ankara government cabinet declared via a government order (*Kararname*) that anyone who informed the government of the activities of the Eşref and Ethem groups would be awarded 200 Turkish liras. Alternatively, those who supported these armed groups would have their villages erased from region and would be deported to other parts of Anatolia.⁶⁴⁶ It should

⁶⁴³ Ibid. 72. Kemal Özer learned this information from the first secretary of the local court in Gönen, Sadık Aydınioğlu.

⁶⁴⁴ Şoenu, *Tüm Eserleri*, 193-194.

⁶⁴⁵ BCA. 30 18 1 1.7.18.16, 7 May 1923.

⁶⁴⁶ BCA. 30 18 1 1.7.18.16, 7 May 1923.

be underscored that this government order was announced a month before the Gönen-Manyas deportations were carried out. It can also be argued that the removal of the 13 Circassian villages from the region were based on this same government order. Ankara saw the Circassians as a security problem, whether they backed the anti- nationalist movement in the region or not. For Ankara, being a Circassian from the region meant one had was a potential rebel. Therefore, the government punished these individuals collectively without differentiating the innocent from the bandits.⁶⁴⁷ If armed groups clashed with the army, the army would consider it reasonable to fire on the entire village. Due to the extraordinary situation in the region, the government took harsh decisions. Policies of intimidation from the government engendered fear among the Circassian residents of the region.⁶⁴⁸ They were encountering collective punishment carried out by the government. Without distinguishing criminals from the innocent, and women and children, the government chose to exile all the residents of entire villages.

Takığ Şevket's village Mürvetler was the first village to be deported en masse by the government. This occurred in December 1922. In addition, 13 other Circassian villages were deported to East and Central Anatolia. Fetgeray also suggests the populations of the 14 villages were exiled to Central and Eastern Anatolia because of their perceived links with the Anatolian Revolutionary Association.⁶⁴⁹ The exiled villages included those in Gönen: Üçpeykar (Üçpınar) 28 May 1923,⁶⁵⁰ Muratlar 5 June 1923; Sızı 9 June 1923; Keçideresi 13 June 1923; Keçeler 17 June 1923. The exiled villages of Manyas included: Kızıl Kilise 7 June; Yeniköy 7 June; Dumye 7 June; Ilıca 11 June Karaçalılık 13 June Bolağaç 13 June; Değirmenboğazı 21 June Hacıosman 21 June. The

⁶⁴⁷ Merve Tram, *Kollektif Cezalandırmanın Tarihi ve Bugününden Bir Kesit*, <http://www.gusips.net/blogger/2244-kolektif-cezaladirmanin-tarihi-ve-bugununden-bir-kesit.html> accessed in 01/03/2015.

⁶⁴⁸ Şoenu, *Tüm Eserleri*, 231-232.

⁶⁴⁹ Şoenu, *Tüm Eserleri*, 222-223.

⁶⁵⁰ From this village 45 people died during the exile due to the circumstances in the exile. Kural, 'Unutulan Geçmişin, interview with Hakkı Acı <http://www.gusips.net/analysis/sozlutarih/4336-hakki-aci-yaslilar-hic-bahsetmiyorlardi-bu-konulardan-eskiden-yasakli-konulardi-bir-yerde.html>.

total number of exiled people was 3,500-4,000.⁶⁵¹ If any of the Circassians were married to a Turkish person, they would also be exiled.⁶⁵² In total, the 14 villages had cultivated around 40,000 acres of land. The land was extremely fertile in this region, and every village had also comprised of about one thousand animals (horses, cows, oxen, and sheep).⁶⁵³ The exiling of the 14 villages not only led to the economic destruction of the Circassians, but also accelerated their assimilation process, by weakening them as a community in terms of their identity and culture.

After the exile had begun, some nationalist Circassians, those who had fought alongside the nationalists were also exiled.⁶⁵⁴ Bekir Sami (Günsav), who was also from the Manyas region, and one of the first persons to organise the national movement in Western Anatolia (but who then split with Mustafa Kemal) wrote two letters to Mustafa Kemal and Kazım Paşa to prevent the deportation of innocent Circassians, and those who had fought alongside the nationalists during the Turkish-Greek War. He underlined that there were many Circassians in the national movement from the Manyas region and that the government should be more careful when deporting Circassians, emphasising also that they should not be killed.⁶⁵⁵ The impact that these letters had is unclear, although subsequently, the Ministry of Defence issued a declaration stipulating that the relatives of those who had fought with the nationalists would not be exiled.⁶⁵⁶ It is clear that not all the residents of the villages were anti-Ankara. Esat Bey from Dereköy, for example, was the head of the Association of Defence of Rights of Gönen (Gönen Müdafa-yı Hukuk Cemiyeti), who had fought for the nationalists during wartime. When martial law was

⁶⁵¹ Şoenu, *Tüm Eserleri*, 232 – 234. Muratlar, Keçeler, Üçpınar, Keçidere and Sızı were the villages where people participated to Ahmed Anzavur's incident. Özer, *Kurtuluş Savaşında Gönen*, 72.

⁶⁵² Ibid. 240.

⁶⁵³ Şoenu, *Tüm Eserleri*, 235.

⁶⁵⁴ Nauke Reşit from Bölceğaç village. He fought with the nationalists. He was suffering from tuberculosis. Reşit was sent to his village to rest. However, he was also exiled. He died during the exile due to his sickness in Afyon city. Şoenu, *Tüm Eserleri*, 240.

⁶⁵⁵ First letter to Mustafa Kemal ATASE. İSH. 430/12, 20 June 1339 (1923), the second letter to Kazım Paşa, 11/08/1923 see Muhittin Ünal, 56. *Fırka Harb Ceridelerinden Miralay Bekir Sami Günsav'ın Kurtuluş Savaşı Anıları 1919-1920* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2016), 1040.

⁶⁵⁶ Şoenu, *Tüm Eserleri*, 241.

declared in Gönen by the nationalists on 20 June 1920, he was appointed as head of a paramilitary unit that consisted of about 300 men and worked for the *Kuva-yi Milliye*. Later, he was killed in a clash by anti-nationalists while serving in the unit.⁶⁵⁷

The conditions under which the villages were exiled were extremely cruel. For instance, the residents of Dereköy were forced to walk to Bandırma, a journey of three days. They gathered in Bandırma in an area akin to an open-air prison. After ten to fifteen days, they were then packed like sardines on wagons used to transport animals. Those from Dereköy were sent to Kayseri.⁶⁵⁸ Another 28 villages (10 were from Gönen villages and 18 from Manyas) were also informed by the government that they would also be exiled.⁶⁵⁹ Only two were fully populated by Circassians. The remaining 26 villages were mixed, with Turks and others. However, only the Circassian populations of these villages were to be exiled. The Circassian residents of the villages sold their houses and land for low prices, since they would be exiled in a matter of days. However, the government changed its course and halted the second round of exiles.⁶⁶⁰

The Gönen – Manyas exiles did not result in any massacres, as seen in the case of Dersim in the mid-1930s and the Armenian *tehcir* of 1915. However, although few people died or were killed during this exile, the incident remains etched in the memory of those descended from the exiles of the Gönen- Manyas region.

⁶⁵⁷ Özer, *Kurtuluş Savaşında Gönen*. 100-101.

⁶⁵⁸ Kural, ‘Unutulan Geçmişin, interview with Hasan Tekin <http://www.gusips.net/analysis/sozlutarih/4334-hasan-tek-in-hayvan-vagon-lar-in-a-n-sa-n-lar-i-bal-ik-istifi-ye-r-le-sti-r-mi-s-le-r.html>.

⁶⁵⁹ Karaağaçalan, Tuzakçı, Hacımenteş, Çaloba, Ayvalıdere, Obaköy, Kumköy, Ayvalık, Bayramıç, Balcı villages of Gönen. Darıca, Işıklar, Hacıyakup, Süleymanlı, Durak, Çakırca, Elkesen, Çavuşköyü, Kızık, Kulak, Eskimanyas, Tatarköyü, Haydar, Eşen, Ergili, Salur, Hamamlı, Muradiye, Geyikler, Karacalarçiftliği villages of Manyas. Şoeneu, *Tüm Eserleri*, 235-237.

⁶⁶⁰ Şoenu, *Tüm Eserleri*, 235-238.

Conclusion

The notion of autonomy was not welcomed by the Circassians. Only a group of Circassians who had already had problems with the Ankara government used the idea of autonomy to ensure their place in Anatolia in a Greek occupied zone. Those who backed the Circassian Congress had already fought against the Ankara government from early 1920 onwards. They could imagine what punishment was in store for them once the Ankara government had finished fighting on other fronts. However, although the majority of Circassians did not support the Congress, they did not back the Ankara government either. The Congress was nevertheless unsuccessful in achieving its goals. With the defeat of the Greek forces, prominent figures of the Congress and the opposition more generally left Anatolia. However, in South Marmara the disorder, which was created by armed Circassians and their groups continued. The security of the region greatly concerned the Ankara government. Meanwhile, negotiations in the Lausanne were on going between Ankara and the Allies. The lack of security in the region could be viewed as a disadvantage to Ankara in these negotiations, and it was thus seen as necessary that the chaos cease as quickly as possible. To this end, Ankara made a decision that was detrimental to the local Circassians in the region: they were deported without due regard for who was a criminal and who was simply an innocent bystander. Ankara thus chose not only to terminate the bandit activities of the Circassians, but also to punish the Circassian residents of the Gönen-Manyas region indiscriminately, by exiling them to Central and Eastern Anatolia.

Chapter Six: The 150'ers, Circassians and the Turkish State 1924-1938

Introduction

In the post-Turkish War of Independence period (1922), armed opposition was seen as more dangerous for Ankara than any political opposition. Therefore, regular armed Circassians of Adapazarı-Düzce and South Marmara were declared *personae non gratae* and were put on a list prepared in April 1924. The opposition of Circassians abroad on the one hand was a threat to Ankara, since they still had the capability to organise assassination attempts and uprisings in Anatolia. However, on the other hand, although they insisted on opposing Mustafa Kemal and the Kemalists, towards the 1930s they lost their capability to carry out armed activities and affect developments inside Turkey. However, the continuity of their opposition in the 1930s became useful for the Ankara government, as they made it possible to strengthen its support among people further and create unity around Mustafa Kemal, the cult character of the regime. This chapter will focus on the anti-nationalist activities of a group of Circassians from 1924 to 1938, and on the Turkish state's treatment of the Circassians in the early republican period. In 1921 with the exclusion of Ethem from the nationalist cause, the Circassian opposition increased its activities against Ankara, particularly towards Mustafa Kemal and his circle. This opposition continued until 1938, when members of the list of *personae non gratae* (the *Yüzellikler*), the so-called '150'ers, were pardoned by the state. Those who stood against the nationalists, such as the organisers of the Adapazarı-Düzce incidents, and those who were excluded from the nationalists by the Ankara government, such as Çerkes Ethem and Kuşçubaşı Eşref, came together against the Kemalist movement. Although they had previously encountered problems among each other, they now had a common enemy in the Kemalists. Çerkes Ethem, Tevfik, Reşit, Kuşçubaşı Eşref, his brother Çerkes Sami, Çule İbrahim Hakkı, Maan Mustafa, a group of Circassians and Abkhazians from

the western Anatolia region, and some Muslims of Anatolia provided the impetus behind this opposition. This opposition first appeared in the Greek occupied zone of western Anatolia, after which time it continued outside Turkey, as members of the group were deported by the Turkish government (having been declared *personae non grate* in 1924). This chapter will first focus on how the list of *personae non grate* was prepared by the Grand Assembly of Turkey, and the motivation for including 86 Circassian people⁶⁶¹ on the list. Secondly, it will focus on the anti-Kemalist activities of those Circassians on the list, such as assassination attempts and the organisation of uprisings; and discuss how in response, their anti-Kemalist and more so anti-Mustafa Kemal activities were used by the Turkish state to strengthen support for Mustafa Kemal. Thirdly, the chapter will study how a policy from the Turkish state directed towards the Circassians was shaped by circumstances in the single party period when the regime restricted the expression of Circassian identity and language in public.

1) Making the List of ‘Traitors’

Anti-Ankara activities reached a highpoint in South Marmara in the post Turkish-Greek war period between 1922 and 1923 (during the Lausanne negotiations). The groups of armed Circassians settled on the Greek island of Midilli in the Aegean Sea after the war, as mentioned in the last chapter. The anti-Ankara Circassians exacerbated the state of disorder that prevailed in Turkey. Although the state took harsh measures to prevent this, by deporting the Circassians to central and eastern Anatolia without differentiating between criminals and innocents in the spring and summer of 1923, gaining absolute control of the region took time. On the other hand, the punishment of the participants in

⁶⁶¹ İzzet Aydemir, <http://kaffed.org/bilgi-belge/tarih/item/226-yuzellilikler-listesi-ve-cerkesler.html> . Accessed on 03/08/2016.

the Circassian congress, and that of other anti-Kemalist Circassians was not yet complete. The government took a further step to punish its wartime opponents.

At the Lausanne Conference, the Allies forced the Ankara government to declare an amnesty for those who had opposed it during the Turkish War of Independence (1919-1922). The state pardon was to be extended to all members of the Istanbul government, and all anti-nationalist bandits, with the exception of one hundred and fifty named individuals. Permission was given to the Ankara government by the Allies at the conference agreement. However, the decision about who should be on the list proved difficult for Ankara, since after almost two years of civil war and four years of occupation in Anatolia, many people could have been added, from western to eastern Anatolia, and from members of the Istanbul government to bureaucrats (including the significant number of bureaucrats, officials and officers who had worked under Allied rule). The decision making process was the subject of enormous discussion in the assembly in Ankara, which examined who should be put on the list.

As a result of the discussion, four hundred and fifty people were decided upon by the assembly. The final version of the list included one hundred fifty people, decided by executives in Ankara. When one looks at the list, it emerges that a significant number of those on it were local people, and very few were important bureaucrats and political figures. The Ottoman family had already been deported by Ankara and the Sultanate was abolished when the list was being prepared by the cabinet and the parliament in April 1924. Therefore, no one was added to the list from the Ottoman family. The criteria for the list were unclear. It can be seen that the participants of the Anzavur, Adapazarı-Düzce incidents, Circassian Congress, and local Circassians of the South Marmara (Gönen-Manyas regions) were on the list. At least 86 names on the list were Circassians, the majority being local people and villagers. This prompts the question: why was the Ankara government mainly fearful of a group of Circassians?

Although the representatives of Turkey negotiated in Lausanne with the Allies to attain only a limited amnesty for those who had opposed it during the Turkish-Greek war, their demands were not accepted by the Allies, whose aim was to protect the minority groups and their wartime supporters.⁶⁶² At the end of the Lausanne negotiations, the Ankara government had to accept that only one hundred and fifty people would be punished, and a pardon had to be issued for the rest. In the official Turkish historiography, only these 150'ers were to be considered 'traitors'. However, the reality was much more complex than the official historiography suggests. Thousands of people who we know about from the official documents, newspaper records and assembly sessions' records were anti-nationalist activists during the war, ranging from local bandits to the civil servants, military officials and politicians. Istanbul and the rest of the country were *de facto* occupied by the Allies immediately following the Mudros Armistice in November 1918.

Although the French and Italian occupation did not last long, the British and Greek occupation continued until November 1922 in western Anatolia, Istanbul, and part of the eastern Thrace. During these long four years, occupation forces worked with hundreds of Ottoman officials to restore order in Anatolia. One can claim that the Allies were not seen only as occupiers by some local people and officials. For them, the allies would be the new rulers of western Anatolia, since the people of Anatolia were already tired of war, having experienced more than ten years of it, since the disastrous times in North Africa, the Balkans, and Anatolia. In the post-WWI period, the Anatolian movement was not taken seriously initially by the Istanbul government and the local people. The nationalists were considered a continuation of the CUP, which was seen by the people as the cause of the current disastrous situation being encountered by the empire. Therefore, to admit the

⁶⁶² Hakan Ozoglu, *From Caliphate to Secular State: Power Struggle in the Early Turkish Republic : Power Struggle in the Early Turkish Republic* (Westport, CT, USA: Praeger, 2011), <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/alltitles/docDetail.action?docID=10508639>. 22.

existence of the Allied occupation meant the termination of a long war, offering an alternative to launching an adventure against the Allied supported Greeks with limited military power. However, history reveals that the latter circumstance was not simply an adventure. The nationalists won the war, both against their internal rival and the Greeks. Now the time had arrived for their opponents to pay the price.

The *personae non gratae* list was prepared during a closed session of the assembly in April 1924. After two separate sessions to debate the issue, the MPs declared the names of the ‘traitors’. It was claimed by the assembly that the 150’ers had not recognised the assembly and its authority. The legal basis for their punishment was the High Treason Law of 29 April 1920 (*Hıyanet-i Vataniye Kanunu*). According to the article, those who did not recognise the authority of the assembly were deemed to have committed high treason.⁶⁶³ To determine the members to be added to the list the assembly held a secret session on 16 April 1924. The demands for the session came from the Minister of Interior, Ahmet Ferit (Tek) Bey.⁶⁶⁴ On the day on which the issue of the 150’ers was discussed in the Lausanne negotiations, the Ministry of the Interior and the General Directorate of Security (*Emniyeti Umumiyye Müdüriyeti*) were already preparing the list. They demanded the names of those who had been involved in anti-nationalist activities during the Turkish-Greek War, and from towns that had either been occupied by the Allies and Greeks or involved in the incidents against Ankara. As a result of this process, six hundred names were determined by the ministry and the General Directorate of Security.⁶⁶⁵ It could be understood from Ahmet Bey’s speech that the classification of the list had already been completed by the ministers in a cabinet session. The list was classified by groups, such as Vahidettin’s Entourage, the cabinet members who signed the Sèvres

⁶⁶³ Kamil Erdeha, *Yüzellilikler Yahut Milli Mücadelenin Muhasebesi* (İstanbul: Tekin Yayınevi, 1998) p. 18.

⁶⁶⁴ Turkish politician and diplomat, 1878-1971.

⁶⁶⁵ *Turkish Grand National Assembly, Secret session 39*, 16 April 1924, <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/GZC/d02/CILT04/gcz02004039.pdf>, 435. accessed on 07/09/2016.

Peace Agreement, members of the Ottoman cabinet who organised the *Kuva-yi İnzibatiye* forces, and its high ranking military generals, Çerkes Ethem and his close circle, members of the Circassian Congress, the leading bandits, and the organisers of the three committees: the committee of Caliphate; the committee of Anatolia; and the committee of the Revolution.⁶⁶⁶ Furthermore, those who had committed high treason, some members of the local administration, the military, police, and journalists were also on the list, presented under separate categories.⁶⁶⁷ The final category was that of ‘other people’ (*diğer eşhas*). Akçoraoğlu Yusuf of Istanbul proposed the list should be prepared based on the principles which the assembly should decide (i.e. who was a traitor). However, the minister of the interior, Ferit Bey, responded by saying that those ‘people who were in the category of ‘other people’ are bandits etc. Would you like any other principle?’⁶⁶⁸ None of the members of the Ottoman family were included on the list, since they had already been deported from Turkey after the law calling for ‘the abolishing of the caliphate and deportation of the Ottoman family from the Republic of Turkey’ was issued on 3 March 1924. With this law, every single member of the family, son-in-laws, and people whose mothers were related to the family were deported. Their Turkish citizenships were revoked and they were banned from entering Turkey.⁶⁶⁹

Ferit Bey explained in the closed session that they had prepared four different lists. The first one included one hundred fifty names, the second one included three hundred, the third one included those who were to lose their citizenship, and the fourth one included all six hundred names. That is, he emphasised that they had six hundred names on the lists in total.⁶⁷⁰ The discussion continued during the session. İhsan Bey of

⁶⁶⁶ Ibid. 435.

⁶⁶⁷ Ibid. 439.

⁶⁶⁸ Ibid. 439.

⁶⁶⁹ Erdeha, *Yüzellilikler Yahut Milli Mücadelenin Muhasebesi*. 67.

⁶⁷⁰ *Turkish Grand National Assembly, Secret session 39*, 16 April 1924, <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/GZC/d02/CILT04/gcz02004039.pdf>, 436. Accessed on 07/09/2016.

Cebelibereket and Mazhar Bey of Aydın claimed that if they tried to find every single person working against Ankara, then the list would consist of thousands of people.⁶⁷¹ The cabinet considered that when the list was prepared not only those who had committed a crime against Ankara would be in the list, but also those who still had the potential to pose a threat to Ankara. Ferit Bey gave the example of the 42 people who had already been sentenced to death for high treason. They still had the potential to challenge Ankara's authority in the region and to cause chaos.⁶⁷²

One could also observe that the majority of the list consisted of local people. Ankara did not consider the Ottoman bureaucrats and military men to be as threatening as those who had the potential to rise up in the regions. Therefore, it is apparent that the chaotic situation in the Gönen-Manyas region and Circassian Congress was the most discomfoting concern for Ankara. Those involved in the local anti-nationalist movement were also a threat since they were expected to continue their anti-nationalist activities and had the potential to mobilise more people. Under the title 'other people' (*diğer eşhas*) there were more than 30 local people from the Gönen and Manyas region. The majority of the names on this list were Circassian. The names were mentioned along with those from other villages, such as Mustafa Remzi of Düzakçı village. Although some of the villages had a mixed Turkish and Georgian population, the majority were populated by Circassians, and Ankara punished the Circassians due to their post-WWI activities and their participation in the Anzavur incident. Although some participants' names were already mentioned during the session, a few were moved from the list later on since some political figures were put on the list. Some of the participants in the Anzavur incident were already sentenced to receive capital punishment. However, the Lausanne agreement did not allow Ankara to execute these individuals. Either they had to be pardoned, or they

⁶⁷¹ Ibid. 436.

⁶⁷² Ibid. 437.

must be added to the list of the so-called 150'ers. However, Ankara found a third way to punish them. Those who were not resident in Turkey at the time were accused of working for a foreign army. A group of those included on the list simply had their Turkish citizenship revoked since they had already left the country for Greece and had reportedly worked for the Greek army. This decision by the Cabinet resulted in ensuring just one hundred and fifty names remained on the list.⁶⁷³

However, a criticism came from Ali Sururi Bey of Karahisari Şarki, who underlined that the list did not consist of political figures, but rather of members of the Liberal Entente (*Hürriyet ve İtilaf Fırkası*). It was formed of bandits who could not harm the general public.⁶⁷⁴ At the end of the discussion over whether political figures should be on the list or not, Hulusi Bey of Karesi articulated that any Circassian named on it would be equal to a battalion of soldiers.⁶⁷⁵ Therefore, they should be added to the list and not the political and intellectual opponents of Ankara. Fikret Bey of Ertuğrul also opposed the current list, as it consisted of individuals who were not deemed capable politically. He argued that this was a matter of security, and that intellectual and political figures should be added to the list.⁶⁷⁶ It was also questioned during the session, why not a single Armenian or Rum (Anatolian Greek) was named on the list, as some MPs, such as, Saraçoğlu Şükrü of İzmir, argued that some Armenians and Rums had betrayed the state.⁶⁷⁷ However, the Lausanne Treaty stated that no non-Muslims, Armenians, Rums or Jews should be included on the list, even if they were involved in anti-nationalist activities during the Turkish-Greek war.⁶⁷⁸ Thus, to avoid further problems with the Allies, the Kemalist government chose not to include any Armenians or Rums on the list.

⁶⁷³ Ibid. 435.

⁶⁷⁴ Ibid. 443.

⁶⁷⁵ Ibid. 443.

⁶⁷⁶ Ibid. 445,446.

⁶⁷⁷ Ibid. 437.

⁶⁷⁸ Ibid. 449,450.

It can be understood from the session records that many MPs were not wholly aware of the details of the discussion regarding the potential members of the list. The Minister of Interior, Ferit Bey, apparently stated the names one by one while the MPs were talking, yelling, and shouting. When the turn came to name the participants of the Circassian Congress, Ferit Bey called the names using their Circassian family names, such as Lampad Yakup. Interestingly, despite being a member of the cabinet partly responsible for deciding who would be on the list, he did not know what these Circassian family names meant. He explained to the assembly that the Circassians used Greek names, and that these family names were Greek names.⁶⁷⁹ This assumption is mostly likely to have been based on a belief that the Circassians were heavily pro-Greek.

It is also worth mentioning that not all anti-nationalists who posed a threat to the Ankara government appeared on the list. For example, the members of the Çapanoğlu family were not added, despite the incident organised by them in Yozgat being one of the most vicious to have taken place in the summer of 1920. If nationalist forces especially Çerkes Ethem had not succeeded in gaining control over the region and had suppressed the incident, it could have spread towards Ankara, the heart of the national movement. However, when he took control of the region, and set up a military court dozens of people were executed, and order was restored in favour of Ankara. However, Ethem was one of the names highest up the list and no member of the Çapanoğlu family was present there.⁶⁸⁰

Ankara had declared Ethem a traitor on the basis that he went to the Greek-ruled region after his split with Ankara. It was risky for Ankara to simply drop his citizenship and prevent his return to Turkey based on this alleged 'betrayal', since Ankara was not be able to prove Ethem had ever served in the Greek Army. If Ethem worked for the Greek occupation forces, Ankara could apply the citizenship law and article 1044

⁶⁷⁹ Ibid. 441.

⁶⁸⁰ It can be also said that some members of the Çapanoğlu family were forced to stay in Ankara after their uprising in 1920. Therefore, it might have been assumed by the government that the family has already been pacified in Ankara.

(*Tabiyet-i Osmaniyye Kanunnamesi*), whereby a citizen who had worked for any other army rather than the Ottoman army could have their citizenship revoked without any other explanation. Therefore, placing Ethem on the list of *personae non gratae* provided a greater guarantee that he would be neutralised than would have been possible using article 1044. Clearly, a political motive, i.e. to prevent Ethem's return to Ankara, was the reason why he appeared on the list.⁶⁸¹ Just a year after Ethem was excluded from the national movement (1922), the situation regarding him and the other oppositionists (the Circassians, Abkhazians and Eşref Bey) was already being discussed by members of the Ministry of War and the Cabinet in Ankara. In regard to their pardon, the Ministry of War asked the Cabinet whether they would be free to come to Anatolia or not. However, on 22 January 1922, the Cabinet declared that they would not be allowed to come to Anatolia.⁶⁸² Ankara insisted that they should be kept far away from Anatolia.

When looking at the situation objectively, one can also claim that there were no substantial ideological differences between the Kemalists and some of 150'ers. Some of those on the list had once been affiliated with the CUP in its early years (as had the majority of the Kemalists in the post-1908 period). After the constitutional revolution of 1908, the CUP did not take power directly. Rather it remained behind the scenes, acting as a check on power (*Denetleme İktidarı*) until the assassination of Mahmut Şevket Paşa on 11 June 1913.⁶⁸³ However, with the growing authority of the CUP, some members broke with it. They were the victims of the repressive policies of the CUP towards the military and bureaucracy. They lost their jobs, were retired or sent into exile on the periphery as punishment. The CUP turned its back on ideas associated with the second constitutional period, relating to 'justice, equality, and liberty' deepened divisions with its opponents. The post-WWI struggle between the nationalists and anti-nationalists in

⁶⁸¹ Hakan Ozoglu, *From Caliphate to Secular State*. 32-33.

⁶⁸² BCA. 30 18 1 1.4.45.16, 22. 1 (January). 1338 (1922).

⁶⁸³ Ali Birinci, *Hürriyet ve İtilâf Fırkası : II. Meşrutiyet Devrinde İttihat ve Terakki'ye Karşı Çıkanlar* (İstanbul : Dergâh Yayınları, 2012), 39.

the post-1908 constitutional revolution period deepened the division between the CUP and the Liberal Entente, which was established in November 1911 after some policies of the CUP in the post-revolution were judged unappealing to them. Some Liberal Entente members were required to leave the empire after the CUP's coup d'état on 23 January 1913 in response to increased pressure from the CUP; namely, Rıza Nur, Ali Kemal, Mevlanzade Rifat, Nureddin Feruh, and Sadık Bey.⁶⁸⁴ Furthermore, after the assassination of Mahmut Şevket Paşa on 11 June 1913, some CUP opponents were dismissed from their jobs, and others were arrested. Hundreds of people were sent into political exile.⁶⁸⁵

For those suffering under CUP rule, the post-WWI period offered an opportunity for the CUP pay the price of its repressive policies of the past. It was a time to take revenge. The members of the Liberal Entente completely opposed the national movement, since its members had come from the CUP. As one these, Mustafa Sabri Efendi, made it clear, they would rather live under the Allies' or infidel *gavur* rule than that of the CUP.⁶⁸⁶ After the CUP leadership left Turkey in 1918, the members of the Liberal Entente came to power, and pursued their policy of non-resistance against the Allies. For them, the Ottoman State did not have any power to continue its armed resistance. The only way to protect the state from disintegration was to conclude a peace agreement with the Allies. However, the nationalists defeated Greek forces in 1922, in addition to their long time opponents of the Liberal Entente, due to their anti-nationalist activities during the Turkish-Greek war of 1919-1922, and were added to the list of traitors in April 1924 by the Turkish Grand National Assembly. Their names were: Gümülcineli İsmail Hakkı Bey, Rıza Tevfik (Bölükbaşı), Mustafa Sabri Efendi, Konyalı Zeynel Abidin Efendi,⁶⁸⁷ and İzmit Governor (Çule) İbrahim Hakkı.

⁶⁸⁴ Ibid. 213.

⁶⁸⁵ Ibid. 229.

⁶⁸⁶ Erdeha, *Yüzellilikler Yahut Milli Mücadelenin Muhasebesi*. 75. Amit Bein, *Ottoman Ulema, Turkish Republic: Agents of Change and Guardians of Tradition*. Stanford University Press, 2011. 102,103.

⁶⁸⁷ Erdeha, *Yüzellilikler Yahut Milli Mücadelenin Muhasebesi*, 61.

2) The Names

The Ministry of Interior decided upon 149 names and the owner of *Köylü* newspaper Refet Bey was later added to the list making 150 names as declared in the official newspaper of the government *Resmi Ceride* on 7 January 1925. The names were arranged into nine groups as follows:

Vahidettin's Attendants

- 1- Kiraz Hamdi
- 2- Commander of the Special Attendants' Unit Zeki
- 3- Prosecutor of State Treasure Kayserili Şaban Ağa
- 4- Tütüncübaşı Şükrü
- 5- Head of the Aides de camp
- 6- Colonel Aide de camp Tahir
- 7- First Aide de camp Avni
- 8- Former Director of State Treasure Refik

Those who signed the Sèvres Agreement and Cabinet Members who took a role in the *Kuva-yi İnzibatiyye*⁶⁸⁸

- 9- Former Şeyhülislam Mustafa Sabri
- 10- Former Minister of Justice Ali Rüşdi
- 11- Former Minister of Agriculture and Trade Cemal
- 12- Former Minister of Navy Cakacı Hamdi
- 13- Former Minister of Education Rumbeyoğlu Fahreddin

⁶⁸⁸ Ozoglu claims that this group were selectively chosen since not every Cabinet member who worked for the *Kuva-yi İnzibatiyye* was put into the list. This included people such as Cemil Paşa (Topuzlu), Minister of Public Works and Ahmet Reşit (Rey) the Minister of Interior. Hakan Ozoglu, *From Caliphate to Secular State*. 47.

14- Former Minister of Agriculture and Trade Kirilhançerci Remzi

The members of the Council who signed the Sèvres Agreement

15- Former Minister of Education Hadi

16- Former Head of *Şurayı Devlet* Rıza Tefik

17- Former Bern Ambassador Reşid Halis

Those involved in *Kuva-yi İnzibatiyye*

18- The General Commander of *Kuva-yi İnzibatiyye* Süleyman Şefik

19- Aide de camp Cavalry Lieutenant Tahsin

20- Commander in *Kuva-yi İnzibatiyye* Colonel Ahmed Refik

21- *Kuva-yi İnzibatiyye* machine gun commander and the aide de camp of Damad

Ferid Paşa Tarık Mümtaz

22- Commander in *Kuva-yi İnzibatiyye* Ali Nadir Paşa

23- *Kuva-yi İnzibatiyye* member Colonel Fettah

24- *Kuva-yi İnzibatiyye* member Çopur Hakkı

25- Former Governor of Bursa Gümölcineli İsmail

26- From *Ayan* Konyalı Zeynelabidin

27- Former Governor of Cebelibereket Fanizade Mesud

28- The Head of the Liberal Entente Colonel Sadık

29- Former Governor of Malatya Halil Rahmi (Bedirhani)

30- Former Governor of Manisa Giritli Hüsnü

31- Former Head of Military Tribunal Nemrud Mustafa

32- The Mayor of Uşak Hulusi

33- Former governor of Adapazarı Traitor Mustafa

34- Former Mufti of Tekirdağ Hafız Ahmed

- 35- Former Governor of Afyonkarahisar Sabit
- 36- Former Governor of Gaziantep Celal Kadri
- 37- The General Secretary of Liberal Entente Adanalı Zeynel Abidin
- 38- Former Minister of Foundations Vasfi Hoca
- 39- Former Governor of Harput Ali Galib
- 40- Former Vice Governor of Bursa Aziz Nuri
- 41- Former Muftu of Bursa Ömer Fevzi
- 42- Former Adviser of Qadı of İzmir Ahmet Asım
- 43- Former Istanbul Guardian Natık
- 44- Former Minister of Interior Adil
- 45- Former Minister of Interior Mehmed Ali
- 46- Former Governor of Edirne and Vice Mayor of Istanbul Salim
- 47- Kütahya governor (during Greek Occupation) Hocarasizde İbrahim
- 48- Governor of Adana Abdurrahman
- 49- Former MP of Karahisarşarki Ömer Fevzi
- 50- Lieutenant (Torturer) Adil
- 51- Lieutenant (Torturer) Refik
- 52- Former Governor of Kırkağaç Şerif
- 53- Former Governor of Çanakkale Mahmud Mahir
- 54- Former Commander of Istanbul Emin
- 55- Governor of Kilis Sadullah Sami
- 56- Former Governor of Bolu Osman Nuri

Edhem and his Friends (*Edhem ve Avanesi*)

- 57- Çerkes Edhem
- 58- Edhem's brother Reşid
- 59- Edhem's brother Tevfik
- 60- Kuçsubaşı Eşref
- 61- Kuşçubaşı Eşref's brother Hacı Sami
- 62- Former Commander of Akhisar İzmirli Küçük Ethem
- 63- Düzceli Mehmed's son Sami Açofit
- 64- Burhaniyeli Halil İbrahim
- 65- Susurluk/Demirkapılı Hacı Ahmed

Those who participated in the Circassian Congress

- 66- Bağ Osman from Hendek/Sünbüllü village
- 67- Former Governor of İzmit İbrahim Hakkı
- 68- Beraev Said
- 69- Berzek Tahir
- 70- Maan Şirin from Adapazarı/Harmantepe village
- 71- Kocakömeroğlu Hüseyin Söke Ereğli/ Tekeli village
- 72- Bağ Kemal from Adapazarı/Talustanbey village
- 73- Hamta Ahmed
- 74- Maan Ali
- 75- Harunelreşid from Kirmastı/Karaorman village
- 76- Eskişehirli Sefer Hoca
- 77- Bigalı Nuri Bey's son Ali
- 78- Kemal from Adapazarı/Şahinbey village
- 79- Lampat Yakub from Gönen/Tuzakçı village

80- Kompat Hafız Said from Gönen/Bayramiç village

81- Retired Colonel Ahmed from Gönen/Keçe village

82- Bizedurug Said, a lawyer in İzmir

83- Şamlı Ahmed Nuri

Police

84- Former Police Director of Istanbul Tahsin

85- Former Vice Police Director of Istanbul Kemal

86- General Chief of Police Vice Director Ispartalı Kemal

87- Former Director of the First Branch of Istanbul Police Directory Şerif

88- Former Head Officer of the First Branch of Istanbul Police Directory Said

89- Former Officer in Arnavutköy Hacı Kemal

90- Chief Police Officer Namık

91- Police Chief of Şişli District Nedim

92- Police Director of Edirne and Governor of Yalova Fuad

93- Former Police Director of Adana Yolgeçenli Yusuf

94- Former Officer in Unkapanı Sakallı Cemil

95- Former Officer in Büyükdere Mazlum

96- Former Second Police Chief of Beyoğlu Fuad

Journalists

97- Member of the Liberal Entente and owner of Serbesti Newspaper Mevlanzade Rıfat

98- Owner of Türkçe Istanbul Newspaper Sait Monla

99- Owner of Müsavet Newspaper in İzmir İzmirli Hafız İsmail

- 100- Former Director of Post and Telegraph, and Owner of Aydede Newspaper Refik Halid
- 101-Owner of Adalet Newspaper in Bandırma Bahriyeli Ali Sami
- 102-Owner of Temin Newspaper in Edirne and Hakikat Newspaper in Selanik Neyir Mustafa
- 103-Former Correspondent of Köylü Newspaper Ferid
- 104- Owner of Alemdar Newspaper Refik Cevad
- 105- Pehlivan Kadri from Alemdar Newspaper
- 106-Owner of Ferda Newspaper in Adana Fanizade Ali İlmi
- 107- Owner of İrşad Newspaper in Balıkesir Trabzonlu Ömer Fevzi
- 108- Owner of Doğruyol Newspaper in Aleppo Hasan Sadık
- 109-Owner and Director of Köylü Newspaper İzmirli Refet

Other People

- 110- Tarsuslu Kemalpaşazade Selami
- 111-Tarsuslu Kemalpaşazade Kemal
- 112-Süleymaniyeli Kürd Hakkı
- 113-Son of Mustafa Sabri İbrahim Sabri
- 114-Manufacturer Bursalı Cemil
- 115- Spy for English well known Çerkes Ragıb
- 116- Haçinli Kazak Hasan who worked for the French Army
- 117- Leader of bandit Süngülü Çerkes Davud
- 118-Major Çerkes Bekir
- 119-Necib, Brother in law of manufacturer Bursalı Cemil
- 120-Inspector Ahmed Hulusi
- 121-Madanoğlu Mustafa from Uşak

- 122-Yusufoğlu Remzi Tuzakçı village of Gönen
- 123-Hacı Kasımoğlu Zühtü Bayramiç village of Gönen
- 124-Kocakuzuk Osmanoğlu Şakir Balcı village of Gönen
- 125-Koç Ali, son of Koç Memed, Muradlar village of Gönen
- 126-Aziz, son of Mehmed, Ayvacık village of Gönen
- 127- Osman, son of Balcılı Ahmed Keçeler village of Gönen
- 128- Molla Süleymanoğlu İzzet İldiz village of Susurluk
- 129-Kara Kazım, son of Hüseyin, Muradlar village of Gönen
- 130- Arap Mahmut, son of Bekir, Balcı village of Gönen
- 131- Guardian Yusuf, Rüstem village of Gönen
- 132- Eyüb, son of Ömeri Balcı village of Gönen
- 133- İbrahim Çavuş, son of Talustan, Küçükler village of Gönen
- 134- İbrahim, son of Topallılı Şerif, Balcı village of Gönen
- 135- İdris, son of Topal Ömer, Keçeler village of Gönen
- 136- İsmail, son of Kurh, Bolağaç village of Gönen
- 137-Canbolat, son of Muhtar Hacı Bey, Keçeler village of Gönen
- 138- İshak, son of Yusuf, Kayapınar village of Marmara
- 139-Sabit, son of Ali Bey, Kızık village of Manyas
- 140- Selin, son of Deli Hasan, Balcı village of Gönen
- 141- Osman, son of Makinacı Mehmed, Çerkes town of Gönen
- 142- Kemal, son of Kadir, Değirmenboğazı village of Manyas
- 143- Galib, son of Hüseyin, Keçeler village of Gönen
- 144- Salih, son of Çerkes Said, Hacı Yakub village of Manyas
- 145- İsmail, brother of slain Şevket, Hacı Yakub village of Manyas
- 146- Deli Kasım, son of Abdullah, Keçeler village of Gönen
- 147- Kemal, son of Corporal Hasan, Çerkes town of Gönen

148- Kazım Efe, son of Kadir, and brother of Kemal, Değirmenboğazı village of Manyas

149- Yallaçoğlu Kemal, Kızık village of Gönen

150- Tuğuşlu Mehmed Ağa, Keçeler village of Gönen.⁶⁸⁹

The people on the list were not deprived of their Turkish citizenship when the law was first passed. At this time, only their entrance to Turkey was restricted. However, later on, on 28 May 1927 with law number of 1064, they had their Turkish citizenship revoked by the assembly, losing their citizenship rights.⁶⁹⁰ The government also forced them to sell their property. Government declaration (*Kararname*) number 880 was signed by the Cabinet on 10 September 1927, indicating that the 150'ers had to sell their properties. They were given only nine months to do so.⁶⁹¹ For those who had died before 1927, their families were authorised to bury them inside Turkey. However, after the law was passed depriving them of citizenship, even their corpses were not allowed to pass back over the Turkish border.⁶⁹²

Military courts were another tool used by the state in this period to strengthen the government's authority over people. This topic is not part of this thesis and further research is required on the role of the military courts, but a brief note is needed. The new Turkish state relied on the military courts to sentence and intimidate wartime criminals and its opponents; thereby, creating a new ideal for the model 'loyal citizen'. The assembly also passed laws to punish civil and military servants for their wartime activities. The names of the military servants expelled from the military were released in

⁶⁸⁹ *Resmi Ceride*, 7 January 1925. 3,4.

⁶⁹⁰ Şaduman Halıcı, "Yüzellilikler" (Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Anadolu Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 1998). 29.

⁶⁹¹ BTCA. 030_01_88_551_9 – 1,2,3. A letter from Kuşçubaşı Eşref Bey to the Finance Minister Hasan Polatkan, (Eşref mistakenly used the title '*Başvekilim*', meaning 'my prime minister'; however, Hasan Polatkan was not the Prime Minister, he was the Finance Minister) in 10.06.1953.

⁶⁹² Halıcı, "Yüzellilikler." 69.

the official newspaper on 7 April 1924.⁶⁹³ In relation to civil servants, another law was passed on 26 May 1926 (*Mücadele-i Milliye'ye İştirak Etmeyen Memurin Hakkında Kanun*); Law number 398. It was published in the official newspaper on 14 June 1926.⁶⁹⁴ 1250 of the 3150 civil servants whose files were investigated were expelled from their jobs, also losing their retirement rights. This list consisted of three hundred members of the Association of Friends of the English (*İngiliz Muhipleri Cemiyeti*), and another three hundred were sentenced to death, including journalists who had voiced unfavourable opinions.⁶⁹⁵ Their problems with the state continued until 1952.⁶⁹⁶ The people on the lists at least secured certain rights, yet the court was used as an important tool of the regime during the early republican period to punish any opposition. There were also some trials based on an article in the so-called 'punishment law' that criminalised anyone insulting Turkishness, the government, the army, the president, the assembly, the republic, or the justice system (*Türklüğü, Hükümeti, Orduyu, Reisi Cumhuriyeti, Meclisi, Cumhuriyeti, Adliyesi Tahkir (hakaret, aşşağılama)*). There are no details regarding how fair the trial process was and few details about the cases in the archive documents; only briefly were the legal grounds for the trials mentioned in the documents. The courts had to request permission from the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA) by 1938; and the TGNA was the only authority allowed to give permission to sentence people accused of insulting the state, the president, and other aforementioned republican units. The records of the trials started in 1926 and ended in 1938, when a change in the law was proposed by Prime Minister, Celal Bayar, to shorten the long bureaucratic process and to accredit the local courts to handle cases from 10 March 1938.⁶⁹⁷ From 1926 to 1938, the courts investigated 1027 separate cases. The average application number was about 500 per year from 1933

⁶⁹³ <http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/arsiv/68.pdf> . Halıcı, 31.

⁶⁹⁴ <http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/arsiv/398.pdf> . Halıcı, "Yüzellilikler." 31.

⁶⁹⁵ Ibid. 32.

⁶⁹⁶ Ibid. 32.

⁶⁹⁷ BCA. 030_10_00_00_15_84_11_1, 2. 10 March 1938.

to 1937.⁶⁹⁸ Almost half of the applicants were allowed by the assembly to bring the case to the courts. Are knowledge of these pre-1938 cases is a consequence of the legal obligation imposed on the Ministry of Justice to ask permission from the assembly to allow prosecutors to investigate the alleged insults. However, from 1938 onwards, it is not possible to establish how many cases were investigated, or how many people were sentenced by the local courts, since these records are not yet open to researchers reviewing the Republican Archives.

3) Anti-Kemalist Activities of the 150'ers

When the war was won by the Ankara government forces, opposition groups left the region. From 1922 to 1938, the opposition attempted to organise an anti-Ankara movement in different countries and cities. Prominent among these were Western Thrace, Thessalonica, the Aegean Islands, particularly Limnos (Midilli), Aleppo and Damascus/Syria, Amman/Jordan, and Iraq. In exile, some of the 150'ers followed a similar path to the Young Turks, opposing Abdülhamit II. Their aim was to create chaos in Turkey and then overthrow the government. They were able to work with other anti-Ankara groups of the period, such as the Armenian Tashnaksutyun and Kurdish groups, just as the Young Turks had done prior to the 1908 revolution.

Before the Lausanne agreement, which was signed in July 1923, hundreds of anti-Kemalists had already moved to Western Thrace and the Aegean Islands.⁶⁹⁹ The anti-nationalist Circassians left the region with the Greek forces. Of note, several thousand Circassians went with Çule İbrahim Hakkı and asked the British to resettle them. However, the British forces could not easily find a suitable place for resettlement. At the time India, Palestine, North Iraq, Greece were among the options examined.⁷⁰⁰ İbrahim

⁶⁹⁸ BCA. 030_10_00_00_44_283_6_1-7. 13 May 1938.

⁶⁹⁹ Evren Dede, <http://www.azinlikca.net/yazarlar/evren-dede/bat-trakyada-150likler-i-.html>, Accessed on 18/08/2016.

⁷⁰⁰ PRO/FO 371/9120 E 611/34/44. PRO/FO 371/9120 E 2953/34/44.

Hakkı wrote to the British ambassador in Athens to try and convince him that due to their work under England against the Kemalists, the Turks now hated them, and they should be sent to Cyprus for safety.⁷⁰¹ As a result of these correspondences, they were settled in three villages in Greece; one established close to Thessalonica, and another two near Athens. A group were later put on the list of the 150'ers. More than a thousand people lived in the three villages until they were pardoned by the Turkish state in 1938. Some of these Circassians settled in Western Thrace, especially around Gümülcine (Komotini in Greek), such as Hafız Reşad Efendi, becoming key symbols in the anti-Kemalist movement in Western Thrace. Hafız Reşad published several newspapers and Islamic magazines, continuing his opposition until his death in 1981.⁷⁰² The archival sources are very limited concerning the activities of these people, and the 150'ers in Western Thrace and Gümülcine in particular. Neither the Greek National archives, nor the Foreign Ministry archives of Turkey have permitted researchers access to their records to review the activities of these people in Greece. However, it is unthinkable that hundreds of anti-Kemalists people could live in Greece without the express permission of Greek authorities, so there must have been some records kept regarding the relationships between the Greek authorities and the anti-Kemalists. In addition, it can be argued that the Turkish government would have certainly followed the activities of the 150'ers. Although police records do exist on these people, they have not been opened to researchers by the authorities of the Turkish Republican archives; furthermore, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also has records on them. Some of the Turkish consulate employees were assigned to track them.⁷⁰³ However, these records have not yet been opened to researchers.

⁷⁰¹ PRO/FO 317/7919 E 14515/27/44. 158-162.

⁷⁰² Caner Yelbaşı, *Bir Muhalifin Portresi*, <http://ajanskafkas.com/gorus/bir-muhalifin-portresi-hafiz-ali-resad/> accessed on 02/08/2016. According to Cemal Kutay, Çerkes Ethem dictated his memoirs to Hafız Reşad, and Hafız Reşad sent the memoirs to Kutay. Cemal Kutay, *Çerkez Ethem Dosyası*, Boğaziçi Yayinevi, İstanbul, 1977. 39.

⁷⁰³ Erdeha, *Yüzellilikler Yahut Milli Mücadelenin Muhasebesi*.124.

Although Turkey and Greece signed the Lausanne peace treaty in 1924, a kind of cold war endured between Turkey and Greece until 1928.⁷⁰⁴ Greece supported the anti-Kemalists and the wartime activities of those people who left Turkey, due to their actions against the Kemalists. In the years following the deportation of the 150'ers from Turkey, Greece was at the centre of the anti-Kemalist activities. There were four different anti-Kemalist groups in Greece: Hacı (Çerkes) Sami, Çerkes (Çule) İbrahim Hakkı, Nigehban-ı Hukuk, and Çerkes Ethem's groups. Ethem's group consisted of Reşid, Tevfik, major Kürt Abdullah, Captain Ethem, Çerkes Kazım, lieutenant Kemal and Sabri.⁷⁰⁵ Çerkes Ethem did not remain quiet in Greece awaiting pardon by the Kemalists. Indeed, contrary to existing historiography, Çerkes Ethem remained undaunted in his attempts to challenge Ankara during his lifetime. He sought a way to put an end to the Kemalist regime and take revenge on Mustafa Kemal. On 4 April 1925, Ethem, Sami and Mevlanzade Rifat, moved to Baghdad using Greek passports, to negotiate with Sheikh Tahir, a local sheikh there.⁷⁰⁶ According to the police reports, Ethem was in Beirut and Syria in the June-July 1925 period with Mevlanzade Rifat.⁷⁰⁷ However, he was forced to leave Syria due to pressure from French forces. He then moved to Aleppo. In Aleppo, Ethem contacted Artufi and another local citizen. He sent both to the Urfa region in Turkey.⁷⁰⁸ According to some reports, he and Mevlanzade Rifat were paid 500 English liras by the British forces, and Vehip Paşa claimed that the application process had been completed for Ethem's stay in Syria in November 1928.⁷⁰⁹

Ethem had already communicated with Kurdish groups and tribes in the north of Iraq. Over the next four years, Ethem attempted to create a Circassian dominated

⁷⁰⁴ Ibid. 97.

⁷⁰⁵ Halıcı, "Yüzellilikler." 170-171.

⁷⁰⁶ Ibid. 170-171.

⁷⁰⁷ BCA. 30 10 0 0.106.695.29, 11 June 1925. BCTA, 30 10 0 0.106.695.30-1. 7-8 July 1925.

⁷⁰⁸ BCA. 30 10 0 0.106.695.30-2. 28 June 1925.

⁷⁰⁹ Tülay Duran, "150 Liklerin Gizli Mektupları (III)," *Belgelerle Türk Tarihi Dergisi; Dün/Bugün/Yarın*, Kasım 1999.66. 28 November 1928.

opposition group against the Kemalists. He sought out Circassians from Egypt, Jordan, Syria and those who had settled in Greece.⁷¹⁰ In Amman, Jordan Çerkes Ömer Hikmet, who was the director of the court, Kabartay Mehmet Taş, a member of the Amman Assembly along with Kabartay Sait Mufti and Muhtar İsmail were all key supporters of Ethem in Jordan.⁷¹¹ They would meet in cafes in Amman and Hemdan. In Cairo, Reşid met with Tevfik, Çerkes Haydar and the director of Camii Al Azhar Çerkes Abdülhamit.⁷¹² Based on the reports from the national police archive, Halıcı argues that in 1929, Çerkes Reşid, Tarık Mümtaz and a group of Circassians organised a meeting in Cairo.⁷¹³ They printed stamps and created a flag to symbolise their movement. The colour of the flag was green and it had the Islamic declaration of faith (*Kelimeyi Şehadet*) printed on it.⁷¹⁴ It is also claimed by the national police that some Circassians from Greece and Damascus were also expected to participate in the uprising in the Dersim region, in March 1927 along with Kurdish groups.⁷¹⁵ Ethem's own writings reveal that he followed a pro-Kurdish policy in that period, voicing complaints about the cruel (*zalimane*) policies of the Ankara government towards the Kurds.⁷¹⁶ However, there are few sources describing his activities with the Kurdish groups in this era, aside from a few police reports.

The exiled members of the Ottoman family, and some of the 150'ers, also contacted one another through letters. The elderly Şehzade Mahmud Şevket Bey, a grandson of Sultan Abdülaziz, contacted the former Minister of the Interior Mehmed Ali (number 45). They went on to establish an anti-Kemalist newspaper, and worked to demolish the Kemalist regime.⁷¹⁷ Şehzade Mahmud wrote in one of his letters that they

⁷¹⁰ Halıcı, "Yüzellilikler." 171 – 174.

⁷¹¹ Ibid. 176.

⁷¹² Ibid. 174.

⁷¹³ Ibid. 175.

⁷¹⁴ Ibid. 175.

⁷¹⁵ BCA. 030_10_00_00_110_740_11. 07.03.1927.

⁷¹⁶ Çerkes Ethem, "Çerkes Ethem meydan okuyor" in Derin Tarih, February 2015, 57-58.

⁷¹⁷ Tülay Duran, "150 Liklerin Gizli Mektupları (II)," *Belgelerle Türk Tarihi Dergisi; Dün/Bugün/Yarın*, October 1999. 71, 25 December 1930 and page 73, 22 January 1932.

had nothing to do with all the Kemalists, and that he hated Mustafa Kemal, as his problem was only with Mustafa Kemal and his friends.⁷¹⁸ They also mentioned Amman in their correspondence. In one of his letters, on 2 January 1932, Mahmud Şevket asked Mehmed Ali how they might communicate with those who were in Amman, as this was where Çerkes Ethem had stayed for a long time. In the next letter, he mentioned that due to ongoing smuggling along the Turkish border with Syria and the Black Sea, it was easy to enter Turkey.⁷¹⁹ He asked Mehmed Ali Bey for Çerkes Ethem to prepare some Circassians as an armed force. He also asked that the Kurdish leaders and Armenians (komites) prepare for an uprising.⁷²⁰ Kazım (number 148 on the list) from Bandırma/Değirmenboğaz, organised correspondence between Çerkes Ethem and a *Şehzade*.⁷²¹ Ethem used ‘Alelhas’ as a nickname when writing letters.⁷²² He requested financial support from one of the Şehzades, probably Ömer Faruk Osman, the son of the last Caliph Abdülmecid Efendi. He further stated that they should work for a revolution, which would save the people of Anatolia from oppression. After the revolution, they should then establish a democratic system, which did not necessarily have to be a republic.⁷²³

⁷¹⁸ Ibid. 73. 24 February 1932.

⁷¹⁹ Ibid. 73.

⁷²⁰ Ibid. 24 March 1932.

⁷²¹ Ibid. 2 January 1932, 22 January 1932. Ibid. 75. end note 4. A young male member of Ottoman Dynasty.

⁷²² Tülay Duran, “150 Liklerin Gizli Mektupları (V),” *Belgelerle Türk Tarihi Dergisi; Dün/Bugün/Yarın*, January 2000. 52. Sometimes Ethem used nick names instead of to write his own name on the letters.

⁷²³ Ibid. 53. 9 June 1932.

4) Taking Revenge: The Insurgency and Assassination Attempts by the 150'ers

The first assassination attempt was organised by a group of former CUP members in June 1926. They planned to assassinate Mustafa Kemal during his trip to İzmir. However, on 15 June 1926, the attempt was reported to the governor of İzmir, and prevented.⁷²⁴ Dozens of people were detained and the attempt became an opportunity for Mustafa Kemal to wipe out both his political and armed opponents. In August 1926, Kuşçubaşı Eşref wrote a letter to Refet Bey (probably to Refet Bele). In it, he accused the Ankara government on the basis that some nationalists had also been executed by Ankara due to personal problems rather their role in the İzmir assassination attempt.⁷²⁵ He was upset by the Ankara government's policies, in that the attempt was used to silence the people. He also observed that several groups could resist Ankara, such as the Kurds (*Kürtçü*), Assassins (*Suikaştçiler*), İttihadists (*İttihadcılar*).⁷²⁶ The Kuşçubaşı brothers Eşref and Hacı Sami⁷²⁷ were all close to Enver Paşa, (particularly Sami, who was Enver's right hand-man in his last days). Kamil Erdaha claims that due to the struggle between Enver Paşa and Mustafa Kemal during the Turkish-Greek war, the Kuşçubaşı brothers, and especially Hacı Sami, expressed feelings of enmity towards Mustafa Kemal, since he did not allow Enver to return to Anatolia.⁷²⁸ Shortly after this rejection, Enver was killed by Bolshevik forces near Dushanbe, Tajikistan in 1922. After an unsuccessful assassination attempt in İzmir in 1926, Mustafa Kemal tried to root out and silence the opposition, and spread his absolute authority throughout the country. The CUP executed included Dr. Nazım, İsmail Canbolat, while other important figures from the nationalist struggle were detained by the regime, such as Kazım Karabekir and Ali Fuat Cebesoy. It can be claimed that Ankara had rid itself of prominent figures in the Liberal Party by

⁷²⁴ Erik Jan Zürcher, *The Unionist Factor : The Role of the Committee of Union and Progress in the Turkish National Movement, 1905-1926* / (Leiden : Brill, 1984) 144.

⁷²⁵ BCA. 030-0-010-000-000-107-702-2.2. 22.08.1926.

⁷²⁶ BCA. 030-0-010-000-000-107-702-2.2. 22.08.1926.

⁷²⁷ He was also known as Çerkes Sami, Kuşçubaşı Sami.

⁷²⁸ Erdeha, *Yüzellikler Yahut Milli Mücadelenin Muhasebesi*, 108.

adding them to the list of 150'ers. With the İzmir Assassination trial, the remaining leaders of the CUP were executed, and its political opponents were detained, and imprisoned. The silencing of the opposition was complete with these two cases. One can speculate that this affected Hacı Sami and Eşref, in that they further saw a need to carry out an assassination against Mustafa Kemal, and to raise up the people of Anatolia for an insurgency.

Sami, his brother Ahmet and three other Circassians Hakkı,⁷²⁹ Düzceli Mecid,⁷³⁰ and Sökeli Mecid,⁷³¹ came to the Kalamaki dock of Kuşadası from the Sisam island of Greece, which is about 20 miles from the Kalamaki Dock, on 17 August 1927.⁷³² Their plan was to follow a route from Kuşadası to Çine, Madran, Salihli, Akhisar, Kütahya, Afyon and to arrive in Ayaş (Ankara) by 15 September 1927, where they would plant a bomb on the railway, with the attention of exploding it when Mustafa Kemal, his ministers and MPs took a train from Istanbul to Ankara. However, almost 8 days after they reached Kuşadası they were seen by the nomads around the Madran Mountain on 24 August 1927. The nomads complained to the local gendarme forces about these strangers. Based on the complaints of the nomads, gendarme forces came to the region and a skirmish erupted between Sami, his retinues and the gendarmes. Sami and his brother Ahmed resisted until the end, but were killed by the gendarmes; the rest of the group, Hakkı, Düzceli Mecid, and Sökeli Mecid were captured and brought first to İzmir and then to Istanbul for trial on 30 August 1927.⁷³³ The reason for holding the trial in Istanbul

⁷²⁹ Düzceli Hakkı (1882-1928). He was born in Düzce/Bıçkı village, married and had eight children. He fought in the Balkan War, and Caucasian front of World War I and then he came back to Istanbul and became an official. In the post-WWI period he was also in the Adapazarı and İzmit regions. He left the region probably with (Çule) İbrahim Hakkı in June 1921 for Midilli. *Cumhuriyet*, 27 August 1927, 1, 6 November 1927, 3, and 19 January 1928, 3.

⁷³⁰ Düzceli Mecid was the nephew of Hakkı, he was from the Bıçkı village of Düzce, see *Cumhuriyet*, 27 August 1927, 1, and 19 January 1928, 3. According to his statement in court, he was taken as a hostage by the Greeks in Bursa during the Turkish-Greek War, and then he was sent to Midilli and Athens.

⁷³¹ Sökeli Mecid, according to his statement in court, fought in Hüseyin the shepherd's group during the Turkish-Greek war. He was taken hostage by the Greeks and stayed in Midilli. See *Cumhuriyet*, 6 November 1927, 3.

⁷³² *Cumhuriyet*, 6 November 1927, 3. 7 November 1927, 2.

⁷³³ *Cumhuriyet*, 31 Ağustos 1927, 1,2.

appears to have been to use the case to intimidate residents who might still not be loyal to the republican regime, since the city had been the capital of the Ottoman State more than 450 years, and the anti-nationalist movement was very active there during the Turkish-Greek War. It should also be noted that after Mustafa Kemal left Istanbul on 16 May 1919 to go to Anatolia, he returned only on 1 July 1927, as Istanbul was not thought to be a secure place for many years. This explains why, when an opportunity arose, the regime grasped it to consolidate its power and show itself to the people of the city.

Some people were also arrested in the investigation,⁷³⁴ starting with Sami's younger brother Mekki,⁷³⁵ and his relatives Ahmed, Halil, and Rasuh Beys, and Atıf Bey, an ex-military commander of İzmit, who was arrested for their relationship with the group's members.⁷³⁶ With the exception of Hakkı, Düzceli Mecid, Sökeli Mecid, and Mekki, many others were released. The suspects would be tried under various articles of the penal code, including article 126 which stated that those who fought against the Turkish republic would be executed; article 146, stating that those who incited disorder could be punished with execution; and article 156, which proclaimed that those who carried out an assassination or an attempted assassination of the president would be executed.⁷³⁷ The trial began on 5 November 1927. According to Hakkı's statement in court, Vehip Paşa and the old governor İzmir and CUP member Rahmi Bey had also supported the insurgency.⁷³⁸ Vehip Paşa was in Romania and was to return to Anatolia to raise the Kurds in the Dersim region. The plan was to travel to Anatolia immediately after the old CUP members were executed for their alleged involvement in the İzmir conspiracy

⁷³⁴ The Prime Ministry Republican Archive (BTCA) records, particularly the court records, have not been opened yet on this incident. Newspapers are the only source for the trial. *Cumhuriyet* newspaper published most of the court records when the trial happened. Therefore, I used the *Cumhuriyet* which was, ideologically speaking, the closest newspaper to the regime at the time.

⁷³⁵ Due to his father's opposition to Abdülhamit II, his father was exiled to Mecca; Mekki was born there in 1901. According to his statement, he fought for the *Kuva-yi Milliye* under Edib Bey in Salihli during the Turkish-Greek war. Later on, Mustafa Kemal ordered his arrest. It is not known when he was released exactly, but after his release he lived in Istanbul/Üsküdar. See *Cumhuriyet*, 7 November 1927, 1,2.

⁷³⁶ *Cumhuriyet*, 6 September 1927, 1. 7 September 1927, 1.

⁷³⁷ *Cumhuriyet*, 4 October 1927, 2.

⁷³⁸ *Cumhuriyet*, 6 November 1927, 1.

of 1926. However, due to a lack of money and Sami's illness they had to postpone their plan.⁷³⁹ They were armed, had rifles, bombs, and about 250 bullets per person; they also carried some food, bandages, and some tincture of iodine in their bag to treat any possible wounds.⁷⁴⁰ They walked in the night, and slept and hid in the morning, over a period of 8 days from the 17 August 1927. Kuşçubaşı Eşref was also going to join them bringing dynamite (after Sami was killed by the gendarme forces Eşref chose not to come to Anatolia). If they could succeed in the assassination of Mustafa Kemal they would publish a declaration on behalf of the Sultan (probably Abdülmecid II), and all over the country, even in Trabzon, and an insurgency would be launched. Then the Sultan and the members of CUP would be able to return to Anatolia.⁷⁴¹ Hakkı also emphasised that if Sami had not already organised people in Anatolia to support him, he would not have become involved in the situation in the region.

It was also underlined several times by the newspaper that Çerkes Ethem and Reşid were also behind the group, supporting Sami and his retainers to carry out their plan, although none of the suspects mentioned this.⁷⁴² It is also noteworthy, as it helps to explain the negative approach to the Circassians in the early republican period, that the head of the court asked Hakkı whether he had fought against the *Kuva-yi Milliye* or not? Hakkı said that he had fought; but, that everyone else had also fought:

Hakkı: *I fought but it was like everyone else.*

Head of court: *How? Was there anyone else who fought against Kuva-yi Milliye other than Circassians?*

Hakkı: *Of course, who organised those rebellions, only Circassians?*⁷⁴³

⁷³⁹ *Cumhuriyet*, 6 November 1927, 3.

⁷⁴⁰ *Cumhuriyet*, 6 November 1927, 3. 7 November 1927, 2.

⁷⁴¹ *Cumhuriyet*, 6 November 1927, 3.

⁷⁴² *Cumhuriyet*, 8 September 1927, 1,2. 11 September 1927, 4.

⁷⁴³ *Cumhuriyet*, 6 November 1927, 3.

The suspects were not represented in court by a lawyer, and were questioned directly by the court, and their trial lasted only two days. At the end of the second day, the prosecutor declared his indictment that Hakkı, Sökeli Mecid, and Düzceli Mecid were to be sentenced to death for their attempt to assassinate the president, their involvement in armed activities against the Republic of Turkey, and their attempt to change the constitutional order. Eşref and his relative Mustafa were given life sentences in absentia, due to their involvement in the Çerkes Sami group and their attempt to assassinate the president and change the constitutional order. However, Mekki, Sami's younger brother, was found innocent and released by the court.⁷⁴⁴

The group was accused of attempting to assassinate Mustafa Kemal; however, they were captured on Madran Mountain, which is more than 700 miles away from Ayaş, Ankara. Despite their lack of opportunity to carry out an assassination attempt, they were sentenced to death for their supposed intent. Eşref and Mustafa were also sentenced to death for their involvement in the preparation of the uprising, even though they were not in the court to be questioned.⁷⁴⁵ Hakkı, Düzeli Mecid, and Sökeli Mecid were executed on 18 January 1928, in Eminönü square, Istanbul. The regime clearly this trial to intimidate its opponents by executing the three in the heart of Istanbul in front of hundreds of people.

Another assassination attempt was allegedly organised by Ethem in 1935.⁷⁴⁶ A Circassian man, Yahya⁷⁴⁷ was arrested by the police forces. According to the subsequent investigation, he and another four Circassians organised an assassination attack against Atatürk on the orders of Çerkes Ethem and his brother Reşid. Urfa MP Ali Saip

⁷⁴⁴ *Cumhuriyet*, 7 November 1927, 2.

⁷⁴⁵ *Cumhuriyet*, 7 November 1927, 2.

⁷⁴⁶ Same as with Sami's case, the Prime Ministry Republican Archive (BTCA) records, particularly the court records, have not been opened yet on this incident. Therefore, I used the *Cumhuriyet* newspaper.

⁷⁴⁷ Yahya was from the Yukarıotluk village of Çarşamba/Samsun, born in 1316 (1898) and from the Sapsugh 'Şapsığ' branch of Circassians, a farmer and workman.

(Ursavaş)⁷⁴⁸ was also involved, providing material support to the assassins. A man named Üzeyir, the brother of one of the assassins,⁷⁴⁹ had complained about the group, which then led to the arrest of Yahya and the other members of the group. According to the prosecutor, Kuşçubaşı Eşref came to Syria and met with Ethem, where the men planned the assassination attempt together. Eşref said that he started (his own) history with the sword and he would finish it with sword.⁷⁵⁰ The prosecutor used the correspondence between several of the 150'ers, including Ethem, Maan Mustafa and Eşref, and the activities of Yahya as evidence of the planned assassination attempt. In the letters, although there was evidence suggesting that they had some plans to come Turkey, there was no convincing proof relating when and how they would come to Turkey, and with what connections they would succeed in their aim. It is impossible to know what motivation the prosecutor had when using the correspondences as evidence in the trial.

Yahya had gone to Syria to make money in order to marry a girl from his own hometown. He stayed in Syria for a few months with the Circassians and then crossed the border and went to Jordan where he met with Ethem in Amman, and was asked about Turkey and its political and military situation. Ethem also told him that he would join the Kurds and they would rise against Ankara, in an uprising that would be more organised than the Sheikh Said one in 1924.⁷⁵¹ Six months later, at the end of summer 1935, Ethem sent Yahya to Turkey, and told him that Ali Saib (Ursavaş), Maraşlı İdris, and Şemseddin Bey of Çokak town would help him. This statement was made by Yahya during the police investigation before the trial; however, in court he denied the latter part of the statement concerning his meeting with Ethem. He told the court that the statement about Ethem had been made under torture. It appeared that the prosecutor was looking for a motive behind

⁷⁴⁸ Ali Saip Ursavaş (1885-1939), Colonel, MP from CHP, and head of Independent Court.

⁷⁴⁹ Üzeyir was owner of farm in Maraş.

⁷⁵⁰ 'Eşref kılıç ile başlamış olduğu tarihi yine kılıçla kapatacaktır'. *Cumhuriyet*, 8 February 1936, 8.

⁷⁵¹ *Cumhuriyet*, 8 February 1936, 8.

Yahya's going to Syria and exaggerated the situation, despite the fact that he went there to make money to marry a girl from his hometown, and to find his relatives in Syria. In Syria and Amman, his relatives and some other Circassians helped him by giving him a job, and providing accommodation for him. The prosecutor found the relationships to be strange and unbelievable coincidences, and made the situation the basis of his investigations.⁷⁵² However, it appears that the prosecutor had fabricated a story based on Yahya's journey to Syria. Due to his lack of knowledge of Circassian networks and traditional customs, the prosecutor misinterpreted the situation. In Circassian tradition and customs one is not allowed to ask a guest, who comes to your home or village, how long he is going to stay, one is only expected to feed his guest and provide him with accommodation.

Hamdi and his friends, Yakub and Aziz, later designated assassins by the prosecutor, stayed in Üzeyir's house. Later, Üzeyir went to the local court and declared that he had some enemies and that those enemies would slander him. He said he was scared by his friends anti-Atatürk talk. It seems that he took this move as a precautionary measure, since he had hosted Hamdi and his friends in his house, and these people were seen to be working on anti-state activities.⁷⁵³ However, Üzeyir's brother Arif confessed that he also saw the people, and heard from Çerkes Ethem's brother Reşid in Jordan that a group of people would be sent by them and that they had told him that he should inform his brother Üzeyir, who should ask Ali Saib (Ursavaş) to conceal the group.⁷⁵⁴ Ali Saib was a very close friend of Üzeyir.⁷⁵⁵ The distance between their farms was about 18 hours by foot.⁷⁵⁶ Üzeyir claimed that Ali Saib had corresponded with Ethem, and that he himself

⁷⁵² *Cumhuriyet*, 8 February 1936, 9.

⁷⁵³ *Cumhuriyet*, 8 February 1936, 10.

⁷⁵⁴ *Cumhuriyet*, 8 February 1936, 11.

⁷⁵⁵ *Cumhuriyet*, 8 February 1936, 10.

⁷⁵⁶ It is worth mentioning that although the beginning of the dispute is not known exactly; before or after the alleged assassination attempt there was an argument over the land between Üzeyir and Ali Saip (Ursavaş) from the 1930s. According to the statements of Üzeyir Bey's son and grandson, their land in Kesikli and Mecidiye villages of Adana (now Osmaniye after 1996), were seized by Ali Saip, just as he

had given a letter to Ali Saib from Ethem.⁷⁵⁷ Yahya also supplied the names of Ali Saib and the local governor of Çokak town, Şemseddin Bey, to the prosecutor for their involvement in the alleged assassination.⁷⁵⁸ Ali Saib's immunity was lifted by the assembly on 18 October 1935; he himself also voted to revoke his immunity.⁷⁵⁹ In his speech to the assembly, Ali Saib underlined that he loved Atatürk and that it would be impossible for him to work with someone like Çerkes Ethem to kill Atatürk who 'created' 'yarattı' (meaning like God). Regarding the discussion about his ethnic identity, which was claimed to be Kurdish or Circassian, Ali Saip emphasised that he was pure Turkish, and that only Turkish blood flowed in his veins.

It is important to note that this case was transformed into another opportunity for the Kemalists and the press. The Kemalists used the case to strengthen collectivisation among their supporters by mobilising thousands to curse the traitors who had attempted to assassinate their divine leader. Student Unions, the Bars, and the People's Houses organised protests around the country from east to west, including among the Armenians, the Jews and Assyrians. Many groups condemned the attempt, prayed for the president and sent telegrams to the presidential palace expressing their support for Atatürk.⁷⁶⁰ Two large demonstrations were organised in Ankara and Istanbul on 22 October and 23 October 1935 and thousands of people joined them. This was turned into a nationwide event and exploited by the regime.

did to some other Circassians of the region. Ali Saip used his position as MP and head of the Independent Tribunal to seize Circassian land in the region. Üzeyir Bey's son took the case to court; however, although the trial started in the early 1950s, it has not finished yet. The European Human Rights Court (EHRC) was also involved in to the trial process, and it was decreed by the court that €19.200 compensation should be paid to the heirs of Üzeyir Bey in 2009. Haşim Söylemez 'Çerkezlerin Toprak Kavgası', Aksiyon, 03 June 2000.

www.aksiyon.com.tr/dosyalar/newsDetail_openPrintPage.action?newsId=506223 accessed on 31/01/2016. For the decision of EHRC <http://blog.kararara.com/aihsnin-8-maddesinin-ve-1-nolu-protokolun-1-maddesinin-ihlal-edildigi-iddiasi/> accessed on 31/01/2016.

⁷⁵⁷ *Cumhuriyet*, 8 February 1936, 10.

⁷⁵⁸ *Cumhuriyet*, 8 February 1936, 9.

⁷⁵⁹ *Cumhuriyet*, 19 October 1935, 1.

⁷⁶⁰ *Cumhuriyet*, 27 October 1935, 1, 7. 20 October 1935, 1, 8. 28 October 1935, 1, 6.

For more than a week, the news of the alleged assassination attempt was in the newspaper headlines. The telegrams sent to Atatürk were published by the newspapers every day. On the other hand, the press used very negative, discriminative and humiliating language. Before the trial started, *Cumhuriyet* had already condemned Çerkes Ethem and his brother, labelling them villainous ‘*alçak*’⁷⁶¹ According to *Cumhuriyet*, the French colonial administration and the Circassians of Syria were working against Turkey.⁷⁶² The members of the Circassian community were accused of assisting the assassins. Those who were detained were called cursed people ‘*melun*’ by the newspaper. *Cumhuriyet* also declared, ‘*an assassination on Atatürk is an assassination on the fatherland and the republic, an assassination on Atatürk is an assassination on the nation and Turkishness, an assassination on Atatürk is an assassination on history and the future, an assassination on Atatürk is an assassination against humanity and civilization.*’⁷⁶³

⁷⁶¹ *Cumhuriyet*, 19 October, 1935.

⁷⁶² *Cumhuriyet*, 22 October 1935, 1.

⁷⁶³ *Cumhuriyet*, 20 October 1935, 1.

Bugün:

2 nci sahifemizde: Siyasal temal - Italyayı abloka tasavvuru ve Akde - nindeki hazırlık

5 inci sahifemizde: Hâdiseler karşı - sında Ahmed Ağaoğlu, nüfus sayımına dair

8 inci sahifemizde: Askerlik bahi - leri: Abidin Daver, spor haberleri

Cumhuriyet

Cinbirinci yıl sayı: 4106

İSTANBUL - CAĞALOĞLU
Telgraf ve mektup adresi: Cumhuriyet, İstanbul - Posta kutusu: İstanbul No. 245
Telefon: Bağımsızlık ve evi: 22364, Tahrir bürosu: 24284, Etiler ve matbaa Kumla Matbaacılık ve

Cumaertesi 19 Birincileğrin 1935

Hayat
Ansiklopedisi
90
mci cüzü çıktı

Mel'un Suikasdıcılar Adalet Pençesinde

Alçak Çerkes Etemin, Ulu Önderin hayatına el uzatmak kasdile yolladığı mel'unlar yakalandı. Urfa Saylavı Ali Saib de tevkif edildi

Hiyanet şebekesi nasıl ele geçirildi?

Çerkes Etemle Reşidin Suriyede silâhlandırdığı beş kişilik çete Maraşa gelerek Ali Saibin muzaheretini temin etmiş!

Dün toplanan Kamutay ihzari encümenin mazbatasını kabul ederek Ali Saibin masuniyetini kaldırdı. Urfa saylavı da kendi aleyhine rey verdi. Tahkikat devam ediyor

Millet Meclisinde

Çok ağır ve acı
Bir mes'ele...

Hükümetimizin bu en ö-
nemli işimizdeki dikkat ve
faaliyetini takdir ve tebrike
lâzım buluruz

Bağımsızlığımızdan

Ankara: 18 Ekim

Bu gün Türkiye Büyük Millet
Meclisi, encüminde ve genel
kurulunda, çok ağır ve acı bir
mes'eleyi onun ağırlığı dolay bir vakar
içinde inceledi ve sonlandırdı:

Atatürkün kutsal varlığına tevcih
edilmiş bir suikast işi.

Bu işte Çerkes Etem ve Çerkes Re-
şid biraderleri tekrar sahade görüyor.
Eğer iş yalnız bu alçak ve hain kardeş-
lerin isimleri etrafında toplanmış bir te-
şebbüsün ibaret kalsaydı belki o kadar
büyük ehemmiyeti olmazdı.

Bir bu hainlerin ancak kitleyle alçak
düşüncelerle vakit geçirecek mahallat
olduklarını çoktan ve pek iyi bildiğimiz
için, haklarındaki hüküm ve kanunları
mizi bu vesile ile daha kuvvetlendir-
miş bulunmaktık. Ve alçaklığın dahi bu-
dudu olmadığın bir kere daha görmüş
olduk, o kadar.

Meclisin reyini beyana davet olundu-
ğu vaziyet üzere bu alçakların bu so-
nuz alçaklıklarından ibaret değil. İlk
tahkikat işleri arasında muhtelif ifadeler-
le bu işe bir me'vumun adı da ka-
rşılıyordu:

Urfa mel'unu Ali Saibin adı.

İsa ağırlığı bilhassa bu noktada to-
planıyordu.

İlk tahkikat vücutta getiren ifadeler,
Çerkes Etem ve Reşid kardeşlerle
hempalanmış şimdi olunanlar gibi sı-
rındıkları enebî diyanlarında hâlâ Tür-
kiyeye ve Türklüğün canevi demek o-
lan Atatürk karış suikasdılar düşünmek-
le vakit geçirildiklerini ve bu maksadla
teşkil ettikleri bir çeteyi Türkiye sok-
muş bulunduklarını söz ve hareket jek-
linde tebliğlerle ortaya koyuyor.

Sarkî Edinde zımbırlı uğursuzlar
sonunu olarak husul Browning revolver-
lerle her adamı beheri on kurşun alan
(30) parşörün ihiva ettiği 300 tane fişek
ve bombalarla teçhiz olunan beş küçük
bir çetenin orada Türkiye günden-
miş olduğuna muhakkak nazirle baki-
makta artık hata yoktur.

Çok mutabassur ve dikkatli olan bu
ikmet terfihinde daha evvel haberdar o-
larak bütün tedbirlerini vakitinde alınıp ve
hükümet faaliyetinin fazlalığı Türkiye
gelen ve giden haydutlardan döndürün
karmasını mümkün olmuştur



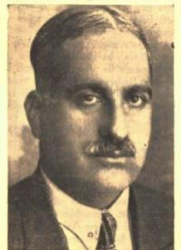
İhzari encümen azası Konya saylavı
General Ali Foa



İhsari encümen başkanı Mağla
saylavı Yunus Nadi



İhsari encümen azası Kize say-
lavı Fund



Dün tevkif edilen Urfa saylavı
Ali Saib

Çerkes Etemle kardeşi Cemiyet kurmuşlar

Hain Etem mektubunda «Adamlarımı Ali
Saibe götür. İş o idare edecek» diyor
Ali Saib dün gece tevkif edildi

Ankara 18 (Telefonla) — Sul-
kask işi üzerinde yapılan tahkikata
göre, Çerkes Etemle Reşid kardeş-
leri bir Çerkes cemiyeti teşkil et-
mişlerdir. Bunlar kendi adıyla -
rından birkaç kişiyi silâhlarında -
rak karar verdikleri suikast işini
yapmak üzere memleketimize gön-
dermişlerdir.

Dört hain brovning tabancaları
ve otuzar şarjör ve birer bomba
ile mücehhez bir halde Samdan
Halebe ve oradan otomobil ile Kilis
hücumuna yakın bir noktaya kadar
gelmislerdir.

Alçaklar, hücumun bir yerinden
gülmeye topraklarımızı girmek Ma-
raşa tarafına gitmişler, orada bir
köyde Üzeyir isiminde birisini ara-
yıp bulmuşlar ve ona misafir ol-
muşlardır.

Suikasdınlardan Çarşamba Yah-
ya buradan bir iş için birkaç gün
arkadaşlarından ayrılmıştır. Üzey-
rin evinde üç hain kalmıştır.

Bu Üzeyrin idmasına göre çete-
ciler Çerkes Etemden kendisine
bir de mektup getirmişlerdir. Bu
mektubda:

(Gönderdiğim adamları Ali Sa-
ibin götürülmeye götür. İş o senin
idare edecektir.)
Gibi satırlar vardır.

Üzeyirden bu mektub istenince
evvelâ yitirilmiş, sonra da Ali Sa-
ibe varlığını iddia etmiştir.

Üzeyrin ifadesine göre o bu iş-
ten korkmuş, evinde bulunan sui-
kasdınlara:

«Kaçın! Yahalanacakmışız,
demis, onlar da kaçmışlardır.

Bir gün sonra Çarşamba Yahya
Üzeyrin evine döndürce onu jandar-
malara korkusundan teslim etmiş-
tir.

Hâdises üzerinde tahkikata bir
aydanberi devam edilmektedir.

Şimdi, Üzeyir, Çarşamba Yah-
ya, bir nahiye müdürü diğer ali-
kadarlardan mürekkep 12 kişi An-
kara hapsetiminde mevkufurlar.

Ali Saibin tevkifi

Ankara 18 (Telefonla) — Kamu-
tayı Ali Saibin tevkif masuniyeti-
nin ref'i hâkkındaki karar sureti
derhal Başbakanlığa bildirildi. Baş-
bakanlıktan da Adliyyeye tebliğ e-
dildi.

Gece saat dokuz buçuk doğru
Ali Saib bizzat Adliyyeye müraعات
ederek tevkif masuniyetinin kal-
dırıldığını ve tahkikat neyi icab et-
tirmeyorsa yapılmasını istedi ve ken-
dini tevkif edildi.

Fransa beklenen cevabını verdi Alınan bütün tedbirlere iştiraki kabul etti

Londrada vaziyet çok ağır görünüyordu, Fransanın
cevabı bir rahatlık temin etti

Paris - 8 (A.A.) — Laval bu sabah
İngiliz büyük elçisine, İtalya tarafından
yapılacak bir tecavüz takdirinde Fran-
sanın İngiltereye Akdenizde yapacağı
yardım hakkındaki Fransız cevabına me-
muni bildirmiştir.

Metni bu akşam büyük elçiyeye verile-
cek olan cevabda, denildiğine göre,
Fransa, Uluşlar Soysetesi statüsünün
16 nci maddesinin 3 üncü fıkrasını tat-
bik edecektir.

Fakat, cevap aynı zamanda, bugünkü
vaziyette İngiltereye karşı bir İtalyan te-
cavüzünün ihtimali olmadığın da hatırlan-
maktadır.

(Ankara 8 inci sahifede)



Paris müzaheretlerini idare eden
na Başbakan M. Laval ile İngi-
lis Sir Corc Klor

İtalyanlar makalleye 30 kilometre yaklaştılar

Yakında büyük bir taarruz bekleniyor. Oğaden
cephesinde şiddetli yağmurlar devam ediyor.
Habeşler geride mevzi alıyorlar



Sinal cephesinde cephane nakliyatı
Amara 18 (A.A.) — Habeş kuv-
vetlerinin Tembine ile Makalle ara-
cılarında Habeş kuvvetlerinin tah-
sında önemli miktarda faaliyet bulun-
(Ankara 8 inci sahifede)

Büyük Harbdenberi görmediğimiz manzara

Dün şehrin birçok yerlerinde ekmek buhranı
başgösterdi, fırın önlerinde hâdiseler oldu



Cumhuriyet newspaper 19 October 1935. 'Cursed Assassins Under Justice! Villainous
Çerkes Ethem!'

Istanbulun Hainlere Nefreti

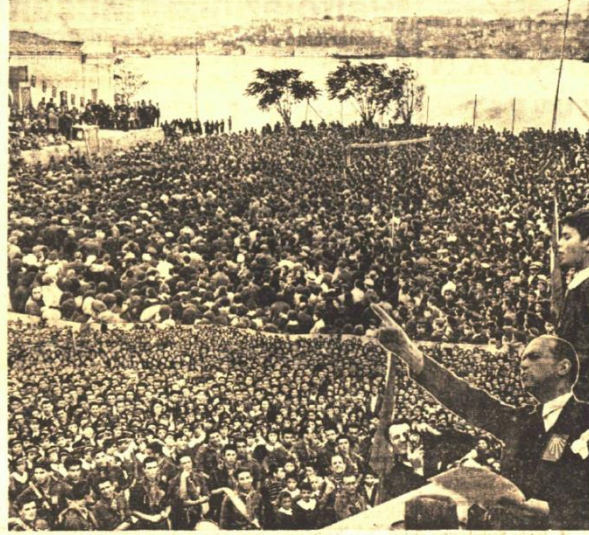


Evvelki gün Ankarada Cumhuriyet meydanında toplanan 50,000 kişilik halk kütlesi

(Baş tarafı birinci sahifede)
kültür. Atatürk ve Türkiye ile kaynaş-
ma bir ulus. Birbirimizden ayrı gör-
müyoruz, birbirimizden ayrı düşünmü-
yoruz ki bütün gelecek tehlikelerden
korkalım. Büyük Şefimiz her an 18 mil-
yon Türkün kalbinde, 36 milyon gözü-
nündedir. Biz bütün Türk ulusu Ata-
türk'e uzanacak elleri kırmağa, gözleri
ormaya, İsmâ düştüren kafaları bir anda
tuz etmeğe hazır bir ulus. Kalkımızde-
ki sevgi, iman, şükran borcu hepimizi aynı
dava arkasında sürüyor. Çünkü Atatürk
Türkiyenin ve Türkiye Atatürktür.

Atatürk ulusun tek kalbi
Kürsüye ikinci olarak Eminönü Halk
rı başkanı Ağah Sun çıktı ve söze şö-
yle başladı:

«— Ey çantası kolunda, okuluna gi-
den genç mektebli, sana medeni bir mu-
hit içinde cennet gibi işkâlı hazırlayan
Büyük Baştan seni ayırmak istedikler, ey
delikanlı sana cumhuriyeti emanet eden
Büyük Önderden seni ayırmak istedikler,
en genç kız, daha dün ninenin kafes ar-
kasında, kapkara bir örtü altında, bir ce-
hennem, bir mahpus hayatı yaşarken, se-
ni bir ve me'ud bir hayata atan Büyük
Atatürkten seni ayırmak istedikler, ey be-
li bükülmüş ihtiyar nine, ihtiyar baba e-
ğer bugünlere kavunmasaydın oğlunmuş,
kızın ve gelininin bir köle gibi düman-
elinde iki kat inlediyim, bir sefil gibi
kahr altında çalıştığını göre göre can ve-
recektin. Şimdi sevimli ocağında, bütün
ailenin selkati içinde sana rahat ve me-
sud bir hayat temin eden o Büyük A-
damdan seni ayırmak istedikler öyle mi?..
Fakat hayır.. ayıramıyacaktılar.. Osm
koruyucusu bütün bir ulustur. Daima ar-
kadan vurmağa alışmış üç buçuk kabipe
değil, bütün dünyadaki dümanlar bir -
İsmâ kardeşiminde toplanmış halk bir ta-



Dün Ushüdarda yapılan muazam mitingden bir görünüş

alan milletimiz bu me'ud ve caniyane
hareketi lânetle yadederken Ulu Başke-
nin prensiplerinden ayrılmıyacaklarını ve
ebediyen sadık kalacaklarını and içerek
bu vesile ile bir daha tekrar ettiklerini ve
sonsuz saygılarını arz ederiz.
C. H. P. Genel Kurul başkanı
Hüseyin Başar

Ayvalıkta

Ayvalık 22 (A.A.) — Gözlebeği -
miz Büyük Şefimize karşı alçak ve sefil
düşüncelerle yapılmak istenen ruhsat-
ta'nin için toplanan bütün Ayvalık halkı
Büyük Önderine, sevgili Atatürklerine
bir kat daha bağlılığını candan, gönül-
den izar ettiler. Hergün içlerinde ya-
satıkları sizi her yıl bugün de topla-
mak için 21 binicilerini Atatürk günü
olarak onayladılar. Sizin yolunuzda can
vermekte bir an tereddüd etmeyen biz
Ayvalıklıların sonsuz sevgi ve saygıları-
nın kabulünü yalvarız.
C. H. P. başkanı F. Doğan

Bursada

Bursa 21 (A.A.) — Canlarına ka-
nıd yapmak intendidığını duyan ve dün
gecedenberi yollara doküleri Bursaya
gelen binlerce köylü bugün saat 10 da
C. H. P. ösünde toplandılar.
Ulusun varlığını sana yikilmas bir si-
per olduğunu öne koydular, iktelerini ve
bağlıklarını onların adına tekrarlar ve
tağlılarını dileriz.
Bursa C. H. P. ilkönbul başkanı
Sadı Konuk

Yozgad'da

Yozgad 20 (A.A.) — Birden ol-
mayan bir takım soyu horuk hainlerin
ulu şahsınıza hazırlanmış oldukları bir
komponun ortaya çıkarılmış olduğunu
duyduk. Size uzanacak el ulusun kalbi -

ların o küstahları tamamile cezalandı-
racasına emin olarak başımızda uzun
yıllar yaşaması ös yükten diler, tü-
kürmez ve sonsuz sevgi ve minnettarlık
larımızı katınızda sunarız, sevgili Atamız
C. H. P. ve miting başkanı
Rıdai Tekcan

Karata

Karata 22 (A.A.) — Atatürk'e yapı-
mak istenen suikast teşebbüsünü Karlılar-
da derin bir tesir uyandırmıştır. Bu-
gün Cumhuriyet alanında on binlerce
yurdtaşın iştirake yapılan bir mitingde
yeltelenler lânetle anılmış ve Atatürk'e
kalkan ve kalkacak elleri kırmak, yok
etmek için and içilmiştir.
Fuat

Gümüşanede

Gümüşane 21 (A.A.) — Halkevin-
de toplanan bütün halk kutsal varlığım-
zın temeli ve özü olan Atatürkümüze
yan bakan gözleri deşmiye ve uzanan
elleri kimya and içiler ve size karşı kü-
ta düşüncelerle hareket ettikleri anlaşı-
lan alçaklar; nefretle andılar. Sünmeyen
sevgilerle yolunuzda can vermiye ve yü-
rümeye hazır olduğumuzu arz eder, elle-
rimizden öperiz.
Halkesi başkanı Vehbi Akay

**İzmirin nüfusu
220 bini buldu**

7 sene evvelki sayıma na-
zaran 28000 fazlalık var

Cumhuriyet newspaper 24 October 1935. 'Istanbul's Hatred for the Traitors!'

Bütün Türkiye tek ses halinde alçakları tel'in ediyor!

«Yapamazlar! Bütün bir ulus ayakta ve dolu bir tüfek namlusu gibi Onu bekliyor!»

Dün Ankarada 50,000 kişilik heyecanlı bir miting yapıldı. Bütün Türkiye muazzam gösteriler devam ediyor. İstanbullular! Bugün saat 3 te Bevezıdda toplanalım. Bizim de bütün dünyaya söyleyeceklerimiz var!



Türk gençliğinin toplantılarından

Ankara 22 (Özel) — Suikasdıcılara karşı bugün burada muazzam ve heyecanlı bir miting yapıldı.

Ta sabahtan itibaren bütün Ankara ayakta idi, halk katile halinde Halkevinin önündeki meydana doğru akın ediyordu. Bu meydana birikenler toplu bir halde Hakimiyetmilliye meydanına hareket ediyorlardı ve bu suretle Hakimiyetmilliye meydanında 50,000 den fazla insan birleşmişti.

Bu kollardan biri bir arabanın üzerinde Atatürkün büyük bir büstünü taşıyordu. Büstün etrafında «Onun başı (Arkan 8 inci sahifede)

Hükümetimiz Fransayı protestoya mı karar verdi?

Brüksel 22 (Özel) — Brüksel radyosu bu akşam şu haberi vermiştir:

«Türkiye Cumhuriyet Başkanı Atatürk'e karşı Suriyede bir suikast tertib edilmesi üzerine Suriyenin Fransız mandası altında bulunduğunu gözönünde tutan Türk Hükümeti Cenevre ile Pariste protestoda bulunmaya karar vermiştir.»

Cumhuriyet newspaper 23 October 1935. 'Villains are being Cursed!'

Çerkes Ethem and his brother Reşid were arrested in Amman, Jordan, due to increasing pressure from Turkey over their involvement in the assassination attempt; however, they were then released on bail. Ethem's other brother Tevfik, Kazım İsmail,

and Edib Kemal were also arrested in Haifa.⁷⁶⁴ Ankara warned the French colonial administration about the activities of Ethem and his co-conspirators, and officially requested the French rulers to deport them (Ethem and Reşid).⁷⁶⁵ The trial began on 9 January 1936 in Ankara, and there were nine suspects in court: Yahya, Üzeyir, Arif, Şemsettin, Şaban, İsmail, İdris, Aziz, and Ali Saib. The allegation of the prosecutor, Baha Arıkan, was that they had set up an armed group to assassinate Atatürk.⁷⁶⁶ The language he used was simplistic and he attempted to incriminate the suspects using small pieces of evidence. For example, when giving his statement about Yahya, he said that because Yahya was a deserter and had been imprisoned before, he was capable of doing any kind of viciousness.⁷⁶⁷ However, in the days following the opening of the trial, some members of the court were still not convinced that there had been an actual attempt to assassinate Atatürk. The prosecutor was not happy with the suggestion voiced by some officials that the entire case was a conspiracy, and he explained in a very demagogic way that the people had not only attempted to take Atatürk's life but also that of the entire Turkish nation, since Atatürk was the soul and representative of the 17 million people.⁷⁶⁸ However, when it came to proving the assassination attempt, the prosecutor was not able to convince the members of the court. At the end of a long judicial process, the trial ended in the acquittal of all the suspects, on 17 February 1936. The reason for the acquittal was a lack of evidence and some suspects' testimony that they had suffered torture at the hands of the police, and had therefore accepted whatever the police had told them during the police interrogation. However, during the trial, they did not accept the claims, and at the end of the trial were acquitted.⁷⁶⁹

⁷⁶⁴ *Cumhuriyet*, 30 October 1935, 1.

⁷⁶⁵ *Cumhuriyet*, 6 November, 1935, 1,7.

⁷⁶⁶ *Cumhuriyet*, 10 January 1936, 1,9.

⁷⁶⁷ *Cumhuriyet*, 8 February 1936, 7.

⁷⁶⁸ *Cumhuriyet*, 7 February 1936, 9.

⁷⁶⁹ *Cumhuriyet*, 18 February 1936, 7.

The trial findings suggest that Ethem and his close circle had always intended to come back to Turkey and overthrow the government and Atatürk. However, over time they had lost their ability to mobilise the people, and had insufficient opportunity to gain support either inside or outside of Turkey, to succeed in realising their aims. The final serious attempt was carried out by Çerkes Sami in 1927, but he paid for it with his life. Although the Greek government had used them against Turkey for a long time, it was forced by the Turkish government to deport them from Greece. Towards the end of the 1920s, Ethem and his close circle were no longer allowed to stay in Greece, and any financial support previously extended to them was taken away by the Greek government. As relations improved between the two governments, the Greeks lost their desire to use Ethem and others. On 30 October 1930, Turkey signed a friendship agreement with Greece. Turkey then demanded the deportation of the 150'ers who had settled in Western Thrace among the Turkish minority in the region. Mustafa Sabri, Gümülcineli İsmail, Aziz Nuri, Sefer Hoca of Eskişehir, İbrahim Sabri, number 124 Remzi, number 136 İdris, and number 146 Kasım were deported by the Greek government.⁷⁷⁰ Ethem and a group of anti-Kemalists then went to the Middle East to continue their opposition. Although Ethem and his close circle did not have sufficient support to carry out an insurgency and overthrow Atatürk, the idea did not die. It seems that they talked about this topic until end of their lives, and Turkish Intelligence Services supposed they posed a potential threat to Atatürk.

The final trial, which took place in 1935, was established by a prosecutor based on exaggerated Turkish Intelligence Service reports; therefore, the court could not find any evidence to sentence the suspects for the assassination attempt. It is worth mentioning here that the language used by the press had dramatically changed by the end of the trial, when the suspects were acquitted by the court. They were called cursed people '*melun*' throughout the trial from their arrest to the end. However, although the press had labelled

⁷⁷⁰ Halıcı, "Yüzellilikler."100.

them guilty before the court made its decision, at the end of the trial, the press addressed its stance, referring to them as merely suspects.⁷⁷¹ The only benefit the regime gained from this trial was that the alleged attempt was turned into a national event; from the east to the west of Turkey, every group cursed or felt it necessary to be seen to curse those who had allegedly attempted to assassinate their president. Atatürk once more strengthened his position as the symbol of the nation, and either willingly or reluctantly, people came together around him, his statues, and in city centres to curse those who attempted to assassinate him.

5) The Turkish State and Circassians

A) Anti-Kemalist Circassians abroad, and Circassians in Turkey

From the archival resources, it emerges that the Turkish State was wary of the anti-Kemalist Circassians, punishing some and monitoring others. On the one hand, Ankara castigated those anti-Kemalist Circassians who had either moved themselves or had been deported by the Ankara government outside of Turkey in the post Turkish-Greek War period, removing citizenship from some and prohibiting their return to Turkey. On the other hand, they remained closely monitored by the Turkish Consulates. For instance, a group of Circassians from Predromos village of Karaferya in Greece participated in a celebration of Greek Independence Day in Thessalonica in 25 March 1937.⁷⁷² This was considered peculiar by the Turkish consul, since they had been brought to Thessalonica to celebrate from their own village, some sixty kilometres away. He elaborated that they had been removed intentionally by the local Greek rulers and the military. He was irritated by their attitude and therefore insisted that the local Greek governor receive a warning from the Turkish authorities over this matter.⁷⁷³

⁷⁷¹ *Cumhuriyet*, 18 February, 1936, 1.

⁷⁷² BCA. 490_01_607_104_2_1 and 2. 24 May 1937 - 26 March 1937.

⁷⁷³ BCA. 490_01_607_104_2_2, 26 March 1937.

Hakuç Çerkes Canbolat was from Uzuntarla village of İzmit. He served as a battalion commander and established a bandit group in Midilli at the end of the Turkish-Greek War. After the war, Canbolat moved to Greece, where he became the local governor (*Muhtar*) of Muradlı village of Gümölcine.⁷⁷⁴ On 18 April 1925, Canbolat had his Turkish citizenship revoked by the cabinet, since he had worked for the Greek government as a local governor.⁷⁷⁵ Çerkes İsmail was another such example. He was a bandit, from Karabacak village of Boğazlıyan, Yozgat, and born in 1889. He had escaped from Turkey to Syria where he worked as an officer in the Circassian unit.⁷⁷⁶ İsmail also had his citizenship revoked on 24 July 1930 for violation of the article forbidding Turkish citizens from working in another army without obtaining permission from the government.⁷⁷⁷ Çerkes Ethem and his nephew Arslan also suffered the same fate. The cabinet decided that due to their desertion and service for another country their citizenship would be removed. However, in the government order, which was signed by the president Mustafa Kemal and the members of the Cabinet, no details were given about Ethem and Arslan's desertion, their activities or under what foreign country they served.⁷⁷⁸

Some changes were made to citizenship law on 23 May 1927. This was named law 1041 (*Şeraiti Muayyeneyi Haiz Olmayan Osmanlı Tebaasının Türk Vatandaşlığından İskatı Hakkında Kanun*).⁷⁷⁹ With this law, an increase in the deprivation of citizenship can be seen. Çerkes Neguç Yusuf Suad from Cedidiye/Düzce saw their citizenship revoked on 3 October 1928 based on this law.⁷⁸⁰ Hapaç Çerkes İzzet of Esma Hanım village of Düzce witnessed the same, due to his absence in the Turkish-Greek war and his activities

⁷⁷⁴ BCA. 030_0_18_01_01_013_24_5_001. 18 April 1925.

⁷⁷⁵ BCA. 030_0_18_01_01_013_24_5_001. 18 April 1925.

⁷⁷⁶ BCA. 030_0_18_01_02_13_54_010. 24 July 1930.

⁷⁷⁷ BCA. 030_0_18_01_02_13_54_010. 24 July 1930.

⁷⁷⁸ BCA. 030_0_18_01_01_017_88_20_001. 31 January 1926.

⁷⁷⁹ This law was in force until it was abrogated in 1 July 1964.

<http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/arsiv/11742.pdf> accessed 07.09.2016.

⁷⁸⁰ BCA. 30 18 1 1.30.60.6. 3 October 1928.

in the post war period on 3 December 1933.⁷⁸¹ Çerkes Ali Haydar of Esma Hanım village of Düzce participated in the anti-nationalists uprising in Düzce in 1920, leaving Turkey for Bulgaria, where he published the *Dostluk* newspaper against the Kemalist regime. Although he was not on the list of the 150'ers, he did not return to Turkey until 1938. After the amnesty was declared, Ankara softened its policy toward the anti-nationalists. Ali Haydar came to Edirne in 1938 to apply for his return to Turkey. The cabinet determined that he would be allowed to return, but because of his suspicious behaviour, Ali Haydar had to stay in Amasya.⁷⁸²

It should be underlined here that due to the activities of the anti-nationalist Circassians, the Circassians of Syria were also monitored by the Turkish Embassy. The Circassian Union was established in Quneytra, with a branch in Damascus. The union concentrated on political matters and charity work.⁷⁸³ The officers of the Circassian regiment of Syria were also members of the society. Some anti-Kemalist Circassians, such as Nuri Canbolat contacted these Circassians.⁷⁸⁴ The activities of these societies were viewed seriously by the Turkish government; the President, Prime Minister, Chief of the General Staff, Head of the Intelligence Service, and the General Secretary of the Republican Party were all informed about the activities of this union, by the Aleppo Consulate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey.⁷⁸⁵ The assassination attempt, and exaggerations of the activities of some Circassians outside of Turkey such as Çerkes Ethem, led to increased pressure on the Circassians by the state in the early republican period.⁷⁸⁶ Although Ankara pressurised the Circassians, much as it did other groups in Anatolia, it did not attempt to deport or send the Circassians from Turkey back to the

⁷⁸¹ BCA. 030_018_01_02_41_91_012. 3 December 1933.

⁷⁸² BCA. 030_18_01_02_85_102_2. 3 December 1938.

⁷⁸³ BCA. 490_01_607_104_1_1 and 2. 17 June 1935.

⁷⁸⁴ BCA. 490_01_607_104_1_1 and 2. 17 June 1935.

⁷⁸⁵ BCA. 490_01_607_104_1_1. 17 June 1935.

⁷⁸⁶ Soner Çağaptay, *Islam, Secularism and Nationalism in Modern Turkey : Who Is a Turk? /*, Routledge Studies in Middle Eastern History ; (London : Routledge, 2005), 114,115.

North Caucasus. Moreover, Ankara opposed moves from outside to encourage the Circassians to move to the North Caucasus. A Circassian student in the Al Azhar mosque in Cairo, Yusuf bin Ahmed, prepared a declaration to encourage the Circassians to return to their homeland in the North Caucasus. This declaration was labelled dangerous by the Ankara government and it was banned from circulation inside Turkey.⁷⁸⁷

B) Restrictions on the Circassian Identity and Language; and the case of the First Miss World from Turkey Keriman Halis

It is worthy of mention that non-Turks were not permitted to express their ethnic identities in public in the early republican period. One example of this is the case of Circassian ‘beauty queen’ of Turkey and subsequently the World in 1932, Keriman Halis. Keriman was born and raised in Istanbul in 1913; she was from the Bijnau family who were Circassians.⁷⁸⁸ She participated in the Miss Turkey Competition in 1932, after the competition was first organised by *Cumhuriyet* newspaper in 1929.⁷⁸⁹ The regime used the organisation for several reasons; to emphasise its modernist ideology and show the world that Turkey was a modern country, as well as showing how the Turkish race was beautiful, and how the republican regime had liberated women from ‘backward Ottoman male dominant’ culture. From 1929 to 1932, three Miss Turkey winners were sent abroad to participate in the Miss World Organisation, although none of them could win any titles. In 1932, Keriman Halis was chosen as Miss Turkey and sent to Belgium for the Miss World competition, where at the end of voting the majority of the members of the jury voted for her, and she was chosen as Miss World.

⁷⁸⁷ BCA. 030-0-010-000-000-105-688-20. 1 December 1925.

⁷⁸⁸ Sefer E. Berzeg, *Çerkes-Vubıhlar; Soçi'nin İnsanları (Portreler)* (Ankara: Kuban Matbaacılık Yayıncılık, 2013) 219.

⁷⁸⁹ Ada Holland Shissler, “Beauty Is Nothing to Be Ashamed Of: Beauty Contests As Tools of Women’s Liberation in Early Republican Turkey,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 24/1, (2004): 107-122.

When she gained the title of Miss World, this presented a good opportunity for the republican media and politicians to promote the success of the regime as liberating women and giving them the rights they deserved. Thirty thousand telegrams were sent to Keriman Halis by people to celebrate her success.⁷⁹⁰ Her success also suited Mustafa Kemal; he made a statement to the effect that he already knew that the Turkish race was historically one of the most beautiful races in the world; therefore, he found the result entirely understandable. He congratulated both the *Cumhuriyet* and Keriman Halis for showing the whole world the beauty of the Turkish race.⁷⁹¹ It is also ironic that although Keriman Halis was born and raised in Istanbul, her family was originally from the Haciosman village of Manyas, a Circassian village whose residents were deported by the Ankara government in 1923 for the anti-Kemalist activities of a group of Circassians in the region, as explained in the previous chapter. Despite this, Keriman Halis became the symbol of the modern Turkish race and state, being used by the regime as the ‘new face of the modern Turkish woman’. After she became Miss World, she was in the headlines of the newspapers for more than a month in Turkey. One headline in *Cumhuriyet* read ‘Turkish Beauty Conquered the World’ (Türk Güzeli Dünyayı Fethetti). Keriman Halis went to France from Belgium, where she was welcomed and a dinner given in her honour by her French hosts. The republican press used this situation to increase nationalist sentiment after the mayor of Deauville/France spoke positively about Turkey. To Turkey’s press, Keriman Halis was not only a Miss World, but also a symbol for use on the international stage.⁷⁹² Her rejection of a prince’s offer of marriage and the British Press’s references to her becoming Miss World were also reported in the headlines of the Turkish press in a very interesting way; for them it symbolised ‘the east defeating the west for the first time (İlk defa Şark Garbi mağlup etti). Furthermore, most probably the

⁷⁹⁰ *Cumhuriyet*, 2 August 1932, 1.

⁷⁹¹ *Cumhuriyet*, 3 August 1932, 1.

⁷⁹² *Cumhuriyet*, 9 August 1932, 1.

newspaper exaggerated the situation since Keriman Halis had told the *Cumhuriyet* she had rejected the offer since she would like to marry someone from her own race, which meant someone from the Turkish race.⁷⁹³



Cumhuriyet

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İPEKİŞ

1 - 15 ağustos

Yerli mallar sergisi - büyük mükâfata iştirak ediyor

Türkiye Güzeli Keriman Halis H. dünya kraliçesi intihap edildi

Türk tütüncülüğünün Hal ve istikbali

Türk tütüncülüğü hakkında yazdığımız yazılarımız muhtelâk alaka u - yandırmaktan hâlî kalmadığını göreberek memnun oluyoruz. Memleket işlerine milletin gittikçe artan alâkası millî ve medenî hayatta tekâmülün birinci âlemelî aşamasıdır. Tütün işlerine alâkadâr olmak için çiftçi veya tacir şeklinde doğrudan doğruya tütüne meşgul olmağa ihtiyacı yoktur. Memleketin İktisadî hayatında 40-50 milyon liralık bir kıymet temsil eden bir mahsul bütün milletin alâkadâr olacağı bir mevzu - dur. Tütün işi iyi giderse bundan memleketin bütün halkı müstefit olur. Memleketin bu kadar mühim bir işi düşünülmezse ondan çıkacak zarar az çok herkesi müteessir eder, hatta mutazarrır eder.

Tütün işinde müdafaa ettiğimiz son tez dahi bize muhtelif karlılıklarından bir çok mükâfatlar sağlama sebep oldu. Bu mütaaleler arasında Beşiktaş'ta mukim olduğumuz anlaşılan Salâhattin Bey isminde bir zatın mektubu itiraz yolunda bazı e - hemmiyetli mütaaleleri ihtiva etmek - te olduğundan bu nüshamıza aynen dercediyoruz.

Orada görüleceği üzere Salâhattin Bey tütün işi için kendisi mütaalelerinden itibaren etimâk ile beraber baş - kalırlarına safon müteallifi ifade ve fikirlerle İhtisar İdaresinin yapıp tütün ihracatına tavassutundan pek fayda çıkıyacağı neticesine varmış olmaktadır. Bunun haricinde Salâhattin Bey bir tütün kongresinin in'ikadını tavsiye ediyor.

Evvâla, Salâhattin Beyin mektubunu aldığımız gün tesadüfen bir tütün kongresinin in'ikadı haberi de gazetelerde çıkmış bulunuyordu. Kendisi o eyleme iştirak edilmeye demektir. İhtisarin kendi esas işi olan tütün ve sigara yapmak ve satmakta pek itinalı hareket etmemekte olduğu iddiası İhtisar İdaresinin yapıp tütün ihrar ve ihracatında isabetli ve mu - vaffakiyetle yürüyemeyeceğine delil tutulmasına gerektir. İhtisar İdaresinin tütünü alıp işlemekte müte - hassas bir idare olduğuna şüpheli yoktur. O kadar ki Avrupa'nın belhışlı büyük tütün ticarethaneleri İhtisar İdaresinin işlemi olacağı yapıp tütünleri daha büyük bir itimat ve emniyetle almaya talip buluyorlar. Avrupa'nın büyük tütün ticarethaneleri İhtisardan mı, yoksa serbest piyasadan mı tütün almak hususunda tayir edilecekler, zannederiz ki, bu alışıncı İhtisar İdaresiyle yap - mağı tercih edeceklerdir. Avrupa'nın bu nevi evleri tütün işinin hakiki mü - tahakkukatıdır. Onların tercihleri ma -

Bütün dünya telsizleri ve gazeteleri Keriman Halis Hanımın müstesna muvaffakiyetini ilân ediyorlar

Keriman Hanım boyasız yüzü, masum güzelliği, kibar hali, emsalsiz endamı ile şark ve garp güzelliğelerini mezcetmistir



Gazi Hz. dün akşam İstanbul'a geldiler

Reisicumhur Hz. Beylerbeyi sarayında bir müddet istirahatetten sonra Dolmabahçe'ye teşrif ettiler

Gazi Hz. dün akşam İstanbul'a teşrif etmişlerdir. Reisicumhur Hz. saat 16,30 da re. fakatlerinde Hariciye Vekili Tev - fik Rıflı, Dahiliye Vekili Sükrü Kaya Beyler ve maiyetleri erkânı bulunduğu halde Yalova'dan Er - tuğrul yatılı hareket buyurmuşlar - dir. Yat limana girdikten sonra ha -

fif bir sayılır yoluna devam etmiş, Beylerbeyine doğru gitmişler. Gazi Hz. Beylerbeyi'nde karaya çıkmışlar, Beylerbeyi sarayına gi - derek sarayda saat yirmi bir ka - dar istirahat buyurmuşlardır. Reisicumhur Hz. bundan sonra gene yatılı Dolmabahçe sarayını teşrif etmişlerdir.

Dünya kraliçesinin bahtiyar annesi..

Ferhunde Hanım kızının muvaffakiyeti haberini nasıl aldı?



Foto: İktisadi

Keriman Hanımın annesi, babasının ve annesinin ile yüksek Foto Keriman'ın babasının

Dün gece saat sekizde, intihap haberinin duyulmasından sonra, bir ar - kadapımız ve üç Viyana'nın gazeteci Keriman Halis Hanımın Fındıklı'daki evine giderek ailesiyle görüşmüşlerdir. Kraliçenin validesi Ferhunde Hanım hırs rahatsız bulunuyordu. Buna rağmen arkadaşlarının pek mü - teffit bir tarafa karıştı. Güşlerin -

Cumhuriyet newspaper 1 August 1932. 'Miss Turkey Keriman was Chosen as Miss World'

⁷⁹³ *Cumhuriyet*, 11 August 1932, 1,4.



Cumhuriyet newspaper 4 August 1932. 'Turkish Girl who Conquered the World!'



Cumhuriyet newspaper 3 August 1932. 'The Turkish Girl Who Became Miss World!'

İPEKİ
Krep Damurları
245 kuruşa,
Krep Birmanları
325 kuruşa
Satılmaktadır

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HALBUKİ...
Aynı ayarada
Avrupa'dan gelen ecnebi ipek-
kileri 400 ve 900 kuruştan
aşağı alamazsınız.

İkinci Tabı

Dünya Güzeline On Binlerce Kişi Karşıladi, Tezahürat Devam Ediyor

Kraliçe Matbaamızda
Cazi Hz. ve Başvekil İsmet Pş. ya
tazimat telgrafları çekti
Kraliçe Belediye ve Furka'da...



Yeditekle'de genç bir kız bayılmıştır. İpe-
klerini terkeden amellerin, evlerini
yürüttü kurşan kadınlara teki et-
tikleri kalabalık arasında sıkıp ka-
lanların bağrımları, alkış sesleri
arasında boğulmuş, buna kalabalık-
tan bir yör gülmeyenlerin şikâyet-
leri de karışma gürültü bîbâbînin
büyümüşür.

Dünya Güzelinin saat on birde ge-
leceğini habere alan halk, İstanbul'un
mühtelif semtlerinden kol kol Sir-
keci'ye akın etmeye başlamıştı. Bo-
ğazici, Kadıköy, Ada vapurlarının
ahabk seferleri bile mutadın çok fer-
künde bir kalabalık Kültü'ye taşıyor-
du. Sirkeci istikametinde sefer eden
tramvaylarda her bir yer bulmak
mümkün değildi. Te Enişin'de
den Sultanahmet'e kadar olan sa-
hada keşif bir kalabalık yığın halinde
idi. Kraliçenin geçmesi muhtemel
olan yollarıdaki bütün müesseseler
ve mağazalar bayraklar ve çiçeklerle
donanmıştı. Bundan başka, bir çok
otomobillerin kervâninde bükümler
olduğu halde Sirkeci garı istikame-
tine yürüdükleri görülyordu.

Garın manzarası:
Saat on buçukta Sirkeci garının



Sirkeci'de Kraliçenin mucavizat ettiği dubâkadan bir an; On binlerce intihâlden adesece
gözetilebilen bir kumun

Dünya güzeli Balkanlarda, Trakya'da fevkâlâde tezahüratla karşılandı

Bir çok şehir ve kasabalar halkı istasyonlarda geçeden
gün doğuncuya kadar Kraliçeyi beklediler

Cumhuriyet newspaper 31 August 1932. 'Thousands of People welcomed Miss World!'

When she returned to Turkey, Keriman Halis was welcomed by hundreds of people at Sirkeci train station in Istanbul on 31 August 1932. She was invited to other cities in Turkey and abroad. She travelled around Turkey and visited Egypt on 30 March 1933; however, on this visit something unpredictable happened, of which the Turkish regime did not approve. Although the national media and state propaganda attempted to show her to the world as the progressive face of the Turkish women, race, and the revolution, when she visited Egypt emerged that she was not of Turkish descent but Circassian. At a dinner given in her honour in Cairo she met with a group of Circassians by chance. In the ensuing conversation, she told them that she was also Circassian. However, her Circassian origins had never been mentioned in public before, as she had

always been presented as representing the beauty of the Turkish race and the modern western face of the Turkish people by the Republican regime. Al Ahram newspaper, based in Egypt, published the news of her encounter with the Circassians in Egypt, and her Circassian identity became known to the public.

Although Keriman Halis denied the truth of the story in her interview with Yenigün magazine (probably fearing further problems with the Turkish regime), she was banned from future public engagements and from attending public events by the republican regime.⁷⁹⁴ The *Cumhuriyet* newspaper archives reveal that although there were hundreds of articles and dozens of headlines and pictures about Keriman Halis before she went to Egypt (from 1 August 1932 to 30 March 1933), after her return from Egypt to Turkey on 19 May 1933, there was just a single very small news item on page 3 with no picture, and no welcome ceremony was organised for her.⁷⁹⁵ After her visit to Egypt, there was barely any news about her in the media, since the regime did not want her brought to the attention of the public.⁷⁹⁶

During the early Republican era, the Circassians had faced restrictions and pressure from the state. The language issue was a focal point of the struggle between the state and the Circassians. The state aimed to create a unified identity and an official language that had to be Turkish. In rural areas, teachers and officials aimed to control and prevent the expression of non-Turkish mother tongues, but their efforts were unsuccessful. However, despite its limitation in the rural context, in the city centres, the state was very well organised and able to prohibit the publication of materials related to the Circassian language, culture and history, and the use of Circassian in public places. The author Çerkes Mehmed Bey applied to the government and the assembly to register

⁷⁹⁴ Mekki Sait, “Yedigün,” May 31, 1933. 14,15. Thanks to Rengin Yurdakul of Şamil Foundation for this information.

⁷⁹⁵ *Cumhuriyet*, 20 May 1933, 3.

⁷⁹⁶ Keriman Halis was engaged to Dr Orhan Bey on 13 July 1937. *Cumhuriyet*, 14 July 1937, 3. Later on Keriman Halis also asked *Cumhuriyet* that they not use her picture and caricature; she had now become history and was working on her own agendas. *Cumhuriyet*, 26 February 1936, 6.

two books on Circassians for copyright. However, his books were categorised as harmful publications (*muzır neşriyat*) by the government, due to their content. The government determined that the publications would be prohibited and withdrawn from circulation on 1 November 1926.⁷⁹⁷ Another example was the Latin alphabet form of the Circassian language, which was prepared and published in Syria, but not allowed by the government within Turkish borders. It was seen as dangerous and officially prohibited by government orders on 9 June 1932.⁷⁹⁸

6) The Declaration of an Amnesty for the 150'ers

In 1938, the suggestion that there should be an amnesty for those involved in the activities against the Turkish state came to the forefront of political debate. It was thought that the Turkish Revolution had been successful, and that it would no longer be possible for the 150'ers to become involved in any activities against the Turkish state, since half of them had already died and the other half were not in a position to take further action. The government's proposal of an amnesty was made to reduce the hardship of the family members of the 150'ers.⁷⁹⁹ In addition, the people on the list were not able to harm the republican regime or its leaders any longer. They had lost their influence and access to networks that would have allowed them to mobilise the masses against the regime. The majority were ageing, and thus unable to involve themselves in any armed activities against the state or the Kemalists. Only a few still posed a threat to Ankara, and they were not allowed to come back to Turkey; e.g. Çerkes Ethem, his brother Reşid and number 55 Sadullah Sami.⁸⁰⁰ There was a long discussion in the assembly over the amnesty. Some MPs were completely against it. Emin Sazak of Eskişehir spoke expressing surprise that

⁷⁹⁷ BCA. 030_0_18_01_01_021_67_017. 1 November 1926.

⁷⁹⁸ BCA. 030_0_18_01_02_29_44_016. 9 June 1932.

⁷⁹⁹ *Turkish Grand National Assembly, Open session 83*, 29 June 1938, <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/TBMM/d05/c026/tbmm05026083.pdf>. 481,482.

⁸⁰⁰ According to Ozoglu, Sadullah Sami attempted to come back to Turkey; however, until 11 June 1957 he was not allowed by the Turkish State. Ozoglu, *From Caliphate to Secular State*, 61.

Celal Bayar's government would pardon the 150'ers.⁸⁰¹ He emphasised that he would like to have seen these people killed, as Ali Kemal had been, i.e. by lynching; and that he would like to kill them by scratching out their flesh.⁸⁰²

Despite the opposition voiced, an amnesty was declared by the government. It was issued for three different categories of people. The first group was the 150'ers. According to the law, these people would still have limited citizenship rights. They were not allowed to receive any salary for their previous service under the Ottoman government, and could not work in the Turkish government for the next 8 years; they could work as journalists, but the law did not allow them to become owners or editors of a newspaper.⁸⁰³ The second group were those sentenced according to the rules of the special council (*Heyeti Mahsusa Kararları*); they would have full citizenship rights, except for in a few areas. They were not permitted to work in government service for the next two years.⁸⁰⁴ The final group were those sentenced in the Independent Tribunal (*İstiklal Mahkemeleri*). Twenty-five of these were still in prison. They were pardoned and were to have full citizenship.⁸⁰⁵ The Minister of Justice, Şükrü Saraçoğlu, demanded from MPs that, although he had noted the long discussion and reaction against the 150'ers, they consider their families and children since they had not committed any crimes against the state but rather were victims of their fathers or husbands' mistakes.

Thus, although the Kemalist regime labelled the 150'ers as traitors to the state and did not forgive the members of the list until 1938, after the amnesty was declared in 1938, some of their descendants faced no discrimination by the state. They were able to take on roles as bureaucrats, high-ranking military officers and diplomats. Rıza Tevfik's grandson

⁸⁰¹ Celal Bayar was himself member of Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) and Ottoman Special Organisation (Teşkilatı Mahsusa). He might personally know those who in the list of 150'ers.

⁸⁰² *Turkish Grand National Assembly, Open session 83*, 29 June 1938, 29 June 1938 <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/TBMM/d05/c026/tbmm05026083.pdf>. P. 472-473.

⁸⁰³ Ibid. 482,483.

⁸⁰⁴ Ibid. 483.

⁸⁰⁵ Ibid. 481,482.

Deniz Bölükbaşı was a diplomat and an MP from Nationalist Act Party (MHP); Mustafa Madanoğlu's son Cemal Madanoğlu was a general in the Turkish army; Ahmet Refik Bey's (number 20) son was a general director of the state owned Turkish tobacco and alcoholic beverages company 'TEKEL'; (number 11) Cemal (Keşmir)'s son Halit Nazmi was the Minister of Finance for the CHP between 1946-48; and, (number 14) Remzi Paşa's son, Şevket Mocan was an MP for the Democrat Party.⁸⁰⁶ Therefore, it is possible to claim that once the regime had secured its position, the Kemalists no longer viewed the descendants of the 150'ers as a threat to the state. Moreover, those who no longer had any problems with the regime, even if their fathers and grandfathers had once been 'traitors' for the state, were permitted to hold high bureaucratic and even military positions.

Despite this, a small group of 150'ers continued to be involved in anti-Kemalist activities. Although Ankara was working on the idea of pardoning the 150'ers in 1938, on 5 April 1938, the Turkish government, through its Jerusalem consulate demanded from the King of Jordan, Emir Abdullah, that Ethem and Reşid should end their anti-Atatürk activities.⁸⁰⁷ İhsan Tunalı, the Turkish Consul in Jerusalem was sent to Jordan by Ankara to demand from King Abdullah that Ethem should stay in Amman without involving himself in any anti-Ankara activities. Abdullah guaranteed that Ethem would stay in Amman, and that he would come under the observation of both the Jordanian authorities and local Circassians. If he became involved in any activities against Turkey, the King assured him, then all the Circassians would be deported from Jordan.⁸⁰⁸ Nevertheless, they established anti-Ankara organisations, including the *Türkiye-Anadolu Yıldırım Komitesi* (Turkey-Anatolia Thunderbolt Committee), in 1938. Celadet Bedirhani, Kürt Emin Broski, Kürt Rifat, Ali Haydar Hoca, Çerkes Reşit, Ethem and his close circle convened

⁸⁰⁶ Erdeha, *Yüzellilikler Yahut Milli Mücadelenin Muhasebesi*, 174, 181, 211.

⁸⁰⁷ Ibid. 182.

⁸⁰⁸ Feridun Kandemir, *Atatürk'e İzmir Suikastinden Ayır 11 Suikast* (İstanbul: Ekicigil Basımevi, 1955), 24,25.

the committee.⁸⁰⁹ The aim of the organisation was to overthrow the Kemalist regime, and to establish a state that would provide freedom and equality to its citizens. The religion of the state would be Islam. Turkish written in Arabic script would be the official language. The system of government was to be decided by the assembly.⁸¹⁰ In May 1941, Ethem attempted to move to Damascus from Amman. However, he was thwarted by the French authorities. Following a demand from Ankara and Amman, Ethem and his friend Emin were arrested for a short time.⁸¹¹ Later, Ethem went to Aleppo, and met with some Circassians there. They included Selahattin Tamuh, Hasan, Çerkes İsmail from Istanbul and some others.⁸¹² After the Second World War started, the meeting focused on the possible German occupation of the Caucasus where Russia was in charge. The Germans promised that if they could occupy the Caucasus, then the Circassians, Georgians, and Azerbaijanis would have their own government under a federal state. The main idea of the meeting was to create propaganda to encourage the Circassians of Turkey and Syria to fight the Germans against Russia for their own government there.⁸¹³

It has to be emphasised that in Turkish historiography Ethem has always been portrayed as having rejected the pardon of the Turkish state, since he considered himself not guilty, and did not involve himself in any activities against Atatürk and Kemalists. Moreover, he rejected the idea of returning to Turkey even after the 150'ers had been pardoned. However, the records disprove this. After the amnesty was declared, the Turkish government informed its consulates that Ethem and Reşid should not be permitted Turkish passports and visas. On 11 June 1942, the National Police Directorate asked of the Prime Minister that the brothers be stripped of their Turkish citizenship.⁸¹⁴ Although this did not happen, Ethem was not refuse permission to come to Turkey. He

⁸⁰⁹ Halıcı, "Yüzellilikler." 248-253.

⁸¹⁰ Ibid. 248-253.

⁸¹¹ Sedat Bingöl, *150'likler Meselesi (Bir İhanetin Anatomisi)* (İstanbul: Bengi Yayınları, 2010), 211.

⁸¹² Halıcı, "Yüzellilikler." 185-186.

⁸¹³ Ibid. 186.

⁸¹⁴ Ibid. 186, 187.

applied to the Turkish consulate twice; the first time in 1942 and then again in 1947. Despite his having been pardoned by the state after the amnesty law was passed, he was refused entry to Turkey due to his continued activities against the Turkish state.⁸¹⁵ Among Ethem's brothers, Tevfik was the first person to come to Turkey after the law was passed. However, he faced financial problems; as although his family had a mill, two houses, and about five hundred and eighty acres of land in Balıkesir, legal problems meant that he had difficulties reclaiming these assets.⁸¹⁶ After Ethem's death, Reşid's son asked President Celal Bayar to allow his father's return to Turkey in 1950. The Ankara governorship allowed Reşid to return to Turkey on 13 June 1950.⁸¹⁷ Reşid came back to Turkey on 2 September 1950, and settled in his son Hakkı Burcu's house in the Bandırma district of Balıkesir,⁸¹⁸ where he died in September 1951.

Conclusion

The list of 150'ers was prepared to ensure there would be no prospect of armed opposition to the new Turkish state. Therefore, many political names were not included on the list. Some of those, still judged to have the capacity to oversee an armed struggle, such as Çerkes Ethem and the Kuşçubaşı brothers were put on the list, and continued to be very active abroad. Their aim was to start an insurgency in Turkey, overthrowing the government and Mustafa Kemal. They had plans to do so for some time, but only in 1927 did Çerkes Sami's attempt come to fruition. The outcome of the attempt was that Sami and his brother Ahmed were killed, and three others were hanged based on the decision of the Istanbul court's decision. This was the last serious attempt by the 150'ers to oppose the Kemalists and Mustafa Kemal. The attempts also represented an opportunity for the

⁸¹⁵ Ibid. 186, 187.

⁸¹⁶ Ibid. 280.

⁸¹⁷ Ibid. 189, 190.

⁸¹⁸ Ibid. 189, 190.

republican regime to gather its citizens around the cult character of the republic, Mustafa Kemal. Citizens clustered together to practice rituals and curse those who had acted against their leader and the republic. These rituals were akin to religious ones. Keriman Halis' becoming Miss World was viewed as a significant opportunity for the republican regime, since she was the true face of modern, liberated face of Turkish woman, which the regime wanted to show the world. Large events were organised to promote and celebrate her success both inside and outside of Turkey. However, when her Circassian origins were made public, she was hidden from public view and disappeared from the headlines. From being seen as a model for the new Turkish woman, and the face of the modern republic, she became an undesirable image, due to her ethnic origin. Her case shows that a narrow mind-set existed among the early republican policy makers, as they sought to create a homogenous nation from among the very different religious and ethnic groups that remained at the end of the empire. Although Keriman Halis did not suffer from state repression to the extent that anti-Kemalist Circassian military-men did, her case still reflects the fact that the Kemalist state had no sympathy for expressions of Circassian identity in the early republican period. When someone committed the error of displaying their non-Turkish ethnic identity in public, as Keriman Halis did, they were banned from public view and lost the praise of the regime.

Conclusion

This thesis aimed to underline the transformation of the Ottoman Empire, by detailing its progress from empire to nation state through the lens of the paramilitary and political activities of the Circassians from 1918 to 1938. It not only focused on the history of Circassians in Turkey, but also the major breakpoints of modern Ottoman-Turkish history, including the creation of the Turkish nation state in the post WWI era, by providing a case study of the Circassians. It proposed to demonstrate how one loyal group of subjects in the Ottoman Empire, the Circassians, were forcibly turned into 'loyal Turkish citizens' of the new republic. Some of dictatorial policies of the early republican rulers denied the different identities of the people, demanding they adopt a Turkish identity. The Circassians were forced to assimilate as prohibitions were made against the use of non-Turkish languages, and other expressions of their identity in public places.

The late Ottoman period witnessed profound breaking points in the empire's history. At the beginning of the second constitutional period in 1908, political matters were excessively discussed within elite circles of the empire. After a relatively free atmosphere, following the loss of Bosnia, the occupation of Tripolitania by the Italians, and the Balkan Wars, the political split gradually became more distinctive. Political divisions increased between the two main political groups, namely the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) and the Liberal Entente (*Hürriyet ve İtilaf*). Although these differences were sometimes rather superficial, both groups harshly attacked and accused one another over the political decisions taken when the other was in power. In 1913, with the coup against the Sublime Porte and the CUP's taking control over the empire, the opposition was either silenced by force or left the empire. The positions, taken by the CUP and Liberal Entente members in the post-WWI era were based on the pre-war division between the CUP and the Liberal Entente. This also affected the political atmosphere within the empire. When civil war broke out during the post-WWI period

between the Istanbul and Ankara governments in 1920 and 1921, those supporting the nationalist cause were close to the CUP, and those who supported the Ottoman Porte and the palace were former supporters of the Liberal Entente. The CUP did not have mass support behind it, since it was seen by the common people as responsible for the disastrous results of the wars fought in the last decade between 1911 and 1919. Its image in public was already very poor, and it was subject to growing dissent against it.

Like other groups within the empire, the Circassians participated in the civil war on both sides, with some individuals playing significant roles. Anzavur Ahmed and the Adapazarı-Düzce incidents were the first threats that were believed to represent a challenge to the nationalist cause, with the potential to spread anti-nationalist sentiment to Ankara, the nationalist stronghold. The South Marmara and Adapazarı-Düzce Circassians opposed the nationalists, due to their ties with the Ottoman Porte and their reaction to the wartime policies of the CUP. Ankara was protected by Çerkes Ethem in the Anzavur, Adapazarı-Düzce, and Çapanoğlu incidents, and he became a nationalist figure as a result. However, the growing power of Ethem caused problems between him and his brothers on one side and the executives of the nationalist cause, Mustafa Kemal, İsmet (İnönü) and Refet (Bele), on the other. Ethem was a useful guerrilla fighter from the perspective of Ankara, as his forces had preserved Ankara three times from palpable threats. However, the regular army in Ankara was slowly becoming stronger as soldiers and military equipment were transferred from the Eastern front, and Bolshevik military and financial support poured in to strengthen the regular army. Following disagreement, however, Ethem was excluded from the nationalist circle at the end of December 1920.

Ever since the Anzavur and Adapazarı-Düzce incidents, a group of Circassians in Western Anatolia opposed the nationalists. With the exclusion of Ethem and the expansion of the nationalists into the İzmit region in 1921, a group of Circassians altered

their pro-Istanbul policy to collaborate with Greek forces. Under Çule İbrahim Hakkı's leadership, they aimed to create a form of Circassian nationalism that would distinguish them, from both the Istanbul and Ankara governments. They declared autonomy in the Greek occupied city of İzmir via a congress. However, their call for autonomy was supported by only a very small group of Circassians, certainly not the majority. This act created a very small, third group of Circassians in Anatolia, positioned ideologically alongside the nationalist (pro-Ankara) and loyalist (pro-Istanbul) camps.

In the post-Turkish-Greek war period (1922-1923), the Ankara government was unable to gain control over the South Marmara region. Armed Circassian groups were the main security threat to the Ankara government at this time. Some of those close to Çerkes Ethem, such as Takığ Şevket, and some other opponents of Ankara such as Kuşçubaşı Eşref, aimed to create chaos and insurgency in the region to achieve their ultimate aim of overthrowing the Ankara government and Mustafa Kemal. During 1923, the group continued its opposition from the Greek islands in the Aegean Sea. Chaos was widespread in Western Anatolia because of the activities of the Circassians and other groups. Considering the significant Circassian population in the region, proportionally a very limited number joined them. However, Ankara took the radical decision to deport the Circassians in the region to eastern and central parts of Anatolia. A decision that took the form of a collective punishment for thousands. Although they were allowed to come back to their homes a few years later, the catastrophic impact of the deportation is still felt.

Furthermore, Ankara took its revenge not only by deporting entire villages, but also by preparing a list of 'traitors', i.e. its wartime opponents. They were also deported from Turkey, and their citizenship revoked. Some members of this group, such as Çerkes Ethem, Sami and Eşref, planned and attempted to assassinate Mustafa Kemal, overthrow the government, and then return to Turkey. Their distrust of Mustafa Kemal was more

personal than ideological, since Mustafa Kemal had excluded them from the Nationalist cause in order to seize control of the national movement, and had not allow their respected leader, Enver Pasha, to return to Anatolia. On the other hand, the opposition in the post-1923 period provided an opportunity for the republican regime to solidify its power over the people. The protests against those who attempted assassinations became a nationalist ritual, whereby citizens of the young republic came together in the squares around statues of Atatürk to ‘curse the traitors’.

Before the single party regime was established, Turkey missed the huge opportunity to create a state for everyone. While there was a pluralistic structure to the first assembly (1920),⁸¹⁹ its MPs were from a variety of backgrounds, from ulema to notables, bureaucrats and high-ranking military personnel. Although the government encountered difficulties making decisions, due to the frequent and lengthy discussions between the different groups in the assembly, the pluralistic structure had to be maintained, since the government required the support of the masses. During the Turkish-Greek War, Mustafa Kemal gradually assumed a dominant, authoritarian position, as an extension of the rights extended to him as Commander-in- Chief, Head of the Assembly and the government (which gave him the right to choose who was going to be a MP).⁸²⁰ With the defeat of the Greeks (1922), the Kemalists, and especially Mustafa Kemal, did not wish to sustain a pluralistic structure, since opposition was seen as an obstacle preventing them from modernising the country. The Kemalist modernist project was not built on pluralism, but rather applied top-down policies to create a nation state. Therefore, the opposition groups were gradually purged from political life, and the basis of an authoritarian political system was set down, creating the cult of a powerful leader in the early republican period that has endured in Turkish political life ever since. Although

⁸¹⁹ Ahmet Demirel, *Birinci Meclis'te Muhalefet : İkinci Grup /*, 5. baskı., Araştırma-Inceleme Dizisi ; (İstanbul : İletişim, 2009).

⁸²⁰ Ibid. 231.

there were developments in the early republican era in social and cultural areas, this type of rule strengthened anti-democratic political culture in Turkish political life.⁸²¹ The apparatus of the state was employed as a tool to shape the citizens of the republic. Through bureaucracy, the military and education, the state not only aimed to transform itself, but also to transform its citizens by interrupting daily life and making decisions for them in terms of the clothes they wore, what books they read, how they should look and what they should think. These things could only be decided by the state.

The republican elites used state mechanisms to create a single typical citizen, rather than to create a multicultural state and society protecting the diverse natures of all its citizens. This approach led to the exclusion of some people from the centre by the elites, who held the state apparatus in their hands. Although society had always been diverse, the new state was based on the Kemalist ideology, which, as we have seen in this thesis, prohibited its citizens from expressing different identities in public, such as their mother tongues. Due to the oppressive policies in the early republican period, many people were not considered ‘true citizens’ of the republic. The state was not based on the values of the people; rather, it imposed its own values on the people by force.

Similar to the other citizens of Turkey, the Circassians were restricted by the regime in terms of using their mother tongue and expressing their identities in public. Indeed, it must be underlined that these topics were not openly discussed until the 2000s, either in the Circassian community or in academic circles. The elder Circassians who lived through this catastrophic period preferred to forget what they had experienced,

⁸²¹ Ibid. 608.

choosing not to mention it to the younger generations. When they spoke about these topics with their friends, any children present were ordered out of the room by the elders.⁸²²

Another reason for the forgetting of the past was the reconciliation that took place between the Circassians and the state. The Circassians did not suffer from the single party regime as much as other groups within the country; i.e. the Kurds and other religious groups. With multiparty elections in 1950, for example, and the coming to power of the Democrat Party a reconciliation process began between the state and Circassians. The negative image the state had towards the Circassians in the 1920s and 1930s gradually disappeared. Cold War-politics also helped to change this image. Turkey and the Soviet Union were on opposite sides and the latter was now both the ‘enemy’ of the Turkish state and the Circassians.

The Turkish state and many Circassians also had mutual interests against Soviet Russia. Turkey developed a good relationship with the North Caucasian emigrants who entered Turkey after the collapse of the North Caucasian Republic, from the early 1920s up until the 1970s as part of its foreign policy against Soviet Russia. Due to this relationship between the North Caucasian emigrants and the Turkish state, the latter extended privileged status to the North Caucasian political emigrants.⁸²³ Although the single party regime oppressed the Circassians of Turkey, it did not affect the foreign policy agenda, which was supported by the North Caucasian Emigrants. This was a win-win situation for both the Turkish state and the North Caucasian Emigrants. While Turkey used the emigrants for its foreign policy, it was used by them as a safe haven in their struggle against Soviet Russia. The emigrants were supported by Turkey in terms of their

⁸²² I met with two people who were sons of two *personae non gratae* (Yüzellilik) in Düzcce and Gümölcine (Greece) Çule Baki Özcan and Sedat Reşat. I heard same story from both of them. They told me that they were not allowed by their fathers to listen to their conversations on these topics.

⁸²³ Arsen Avagyan, *Türk Dış Siyasetinde Kuzey Kafkasya Siyasi Muhacereti (1920-1971)* (İstanbul: Belge Yayınları, 2013), 14, 15.

publications, political mobilisation, and of establishing political networks with others of Circassian origin in European associations.⁸²⁴

In terms of using the emigrants effectively, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the military, police, and intelligence services worked in coordination.⁸²⁵ From the 1920s until the end of the 1930s, Turkey was much more independent in terms of creating policy and using emigrants. In 1925, Istanbul was seen as a centre for emigrants by Russia, and thus represented an opportunity to strengthen its own network via intelligence agents.⁸²⁶ From late 1930 to the mid-1940s onwards, Turkey worked with Great Britain, France, Poland and later Germany against Russia.⁸²⁷ Although the Circassians had difficulties with the Turkish nation state in the first two decades of the regime, aside from a few minority groups of Circassians, even the anti-Kemalist Circassians had never aimed to establish an independent state. They fought against Mustafa Kemal and his single party regime and tried to overthrow it, with the aim of replacing it with a more pluralistic one. They never had fundamental problems with the other peoples living in Anatolia. One can argue that despite some problems in the early republican period, the Circassians did not have an especially negative impact on either the state or society. Therefore, one might also claim that with the arrival of these latest emigrants, the Circassians were given a little bit more freedom, being allowed officially by the state to open the first non-Turkish community association in modern republican history with the Azerbaijanis of Turkey, namely the ‘Dost Eli Yardımlaşma Derneği’ in 1946.⁸²⁸ Furthermore, from the intelligence service to the military, the Circassians were not restricted in Turkey post-1950.

⁸²⁴ Ibid. 14, 15.

⁸²⁵ Ibid. 16, 17.

⁸²⁶ Ibid. 128.

⁸²⁷ Ibid. 16, 17.

⁸²⁸ Ibid. 18.

Another important topic covered in this thesis in relation to Circassians in the republican era, was the Çerkes Ethem incident. Although a limited reconciliation occurred between the Circassians and the Turkish State in the post 1950s era, the issue of Çerkes Ethem was an ambiguous topic for Circassians. On the one hand, while Çerkes Ethem did not represent all the Circassians in Turkey, and not the all Circassians supported him, he nevertheless became a symbol for the Circassians. He was introduced to pupils in schools as a traitor, something that persists in the official curriculum until today. Although there are plenty of interpretations of his life, school texts still rely on Atatürk's *Nutuk*, in which Atatürk accuses Ethem of being an agent who worked for himself and the interests of the other states.

On the other hand, elsewhere Ethem came to have a very positive meaning for some Circassians, especially those who felt themselves close to republican Turkey and were proud of Ethem for having suppressed three very significant incidents, which had saved Ankara from defeat at the hands of anti-nationalists. Indeed, this became part of a newly imagined Circassian identity, which glorified having one of its own responsible for founding modern Turkey, along with an emphasis on the significant numbers of high-ranking soldiers and bureaucrats who participated in the nationalist struggle to fight against the occupation. Ethem's suppression of the incidents strengthened this narrative and became a founding element of Turkey. They used Ethem to prove their 'loyalty' to the Turkish state and its values, but only focused on his early activities from 1919 to December 1920, ignoring his later exclusion from the nationalist circle. The activities post-December 1920 were not considered, since they were seen as too complex and damaging to Ethem's image as a saviour of Turkey, rather than as an assassin or insurgency leader aiming to overthrow Mustafa Kemal (as had actually happened in the post-1921 period).

However, what is interesting here is that the Circassians prefer not to recall that the majority of Circassians were loyal to the Sultan/Caliph, as were the majority of Anatolia's peoples. This group rose against the nationalists since they did not want to be engaged in war any longer; indeed, they were very war-weary by this time. Furthermore, a group of Circassians, the majority of whom were former Ottoman soldiers and agents, aimed to create an insurgency in Turkey in opposition to the Kemalists. One of the reasons for the problems noted is that Ethem's life was not evaluated from beginning to end. Some groups and people used part of his life to support their own arguments, either claiming that he was a 'hero', or the reverse, that he was a 'traitor.' This approach also dominates Turkish academia, and there is not yet a well-documented and balanced book or thesis relating to him written in Turkish.

Undoubtedly, the Circassians suffered from state oppression in the early republican period, but their suffering was in fact much less when compared to that of the Kurds and other minority groups. However, they did suffer from oppression by the state in ideological terms, as a response to their closeness to the Ottoman State, especially the Harem and the military and intelligence services, and because of the Çerkes Ethem incident. For high-ranking Kemalists, politicians and statesman in the early republican period, Circassian identity was associated with either 'backwardness', the Ottoman State or the 'traitor' Çerkes Ethem. They were seen by the republican elites as a reminder of the bad old days of the Ottoman Empire, and the civil war between the Ankara and Istanbul governments. On the other hand, because the Circassian population lived in rural areas and villages, their oppression by the state did not result in full assimilation or adoption of the new Turkish identity being promoted in the republican era. Indeed, the Turkish State was not sufficiently well organised to interrupt the daily life of the rural population, and so the Circassians continued to live very close to their own ethnic kin, practicing inter-Circassian marriage widely.

It can be argued that the urbanisation of the Circassian population after the 1950s had a huge impact on the assimilation of Circassian identity; even more so than the policies of the Kemalists in the early republican period. Prior to this, the Circassians lived in villages where they were isolated from the centre and their identity was protected from the assimilationist policies of the Kemalism. However, with the higher rates of urbanisation, the influence of the Kemalist nation state ideology increased on the Circassians. Thus, when the Kemalist regime was most oppressive, between the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, the Circassian identity was less affected by its policies, since the Turkish state could no longer control the rural areas as effectively as the urban ones. However, although the Turkish state had begun to be less oppressive from the 1950s onwards, preventing the Circassian identity from assimilation was much more difficult than it had been in the previous period, since the Circassians moved to the cities and were educated *en masse* under the Kemalist education system.

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